SETTLERS, VISITORS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

DIVERSITY IN PORTSMOUTH SINCE THE LATE 18TH CENTURY

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About this Portsmouth Paper

Often forgotten, or just ignored, the minority communities of Portsmouth have a long and fascinating history. Their story, outlined in this Portsmouth Paper, ranges from Jewish merchants who served the needs of the navy in the 18th century through to modern-day restauranteurs. A name that stands out is Marc Brunel. An early asylum seeker, he brought with him a revolutionary invention that helped the navy during a time of crisis. His story is similar to many others. Forced to leave his own country by oppression, he came to Portsmouth in search of a new life. Having much to offer, he also became a victim of prejudice. In contributing their skills, combined with a desire to work hard, many of those who have come to Portsmouth have also suffered in ways similar to Marc Brunel.

Front Cover:
A lion dance in Guildhall Square, 2000, part of a festival of Chinese culture organised by the Portsmouth Chinese Association.
(PMRS, courtesy of the Portsmouth Chinese Association)

Back cover:
Cooking at the Gandhi Restaurant, 2002. Catering has long been associated with the minority communities of Portsmouth, with many who first arrived in the area opening restaurants that frequently offered something new and different to the established population of the city.
(PMRS)

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Settlers, Visitors and Asylum Seekers

Diversity in Portsmouth since the late 18th century

Philip MacDougall, PhD

Introduction

Conventional histories of Portsmouth give little or no attention to the role played by overseas settlers to the development of the city. For this reason, large numbers of those living in Portsmouth are denied a record of their own history. It is intended that this paper should help correct this omission. Furthermore, it will also show that the city of Portsmouth has been a diverse community for at least two hundred years. A more recent growth in the size of the city's ethnic minority communities is simply the continuance of a long-established pattern.

In writing this paper, however, it would be easy to overstate the size of the city's minority ethnic communities. When compared with a number of other cities and towns within the rest of the country, the numbers who have chosen to settle in Portsmouth are not as high. London, in particular, has always received much greater proportions of immigrants, with Nick Merriman tracing a continuous history of overseas settlement stretching back some 1,500 years.[1] In addition, while Portsmouth can boast approximately 60 languages spoken throughout the city, London can claim nearly two hundred.[2] Similarly, while certain ethnic minorities have particularly favoured Portsmouth, these same community groups have invariably seen larger settlements in other parts of the country. A case in point is the Bangladeshi community, currently the largest community group in Portsmouth but numbering less than 3,000.[3] In the London area, on the other hand, more than half the Bangladeshis in the country have settled, their numbers here totalling approximately 140,000.[4] In the 19th century the largest settled minority ethnic community in Portsmouth were those of Irish descent. The 1851 census records that Portsmouth had just over 1,000 Irish-born residents and to which figure second-generation Irish families should be added. However, this was as nothing compared with Liverpool where the Irish population in 1851 numbered 83,949 and Manchester where it numbered 52,504. Nevertheless, despite the smaller size of Portsmouth's various overseas communities, all have had a considerable impact on the city, helping influence the way it has developed.

2001 Portsmouth Census by Ethnicity		
Ethnic Group	Total Number	Percentage in total population
African	601	0.3
Bangladeshi	2,600	1.4
Caribbean	219	0.1
Other Black	122	0.1
Chinese	1,680	0.9
Indian	1,320	0.7
Irish	1,339	0.7
Mixed Caribbean	414	0.1
Mixed African	235	0.2
White Mixed African	560	0.3

Particular emphasis has been placed upon those who have permanently settled in the city of Portsmouth. As the title demonstrates, this is not to the exclusion of those who have had a less permanent connection with the city. The term 'visitors' is used to refer to those who have lived in Portsmouth for an extended but not permanent period and includes those brought here by the Army and Navy together with others who have simply passed through. Finally, asylum seekers have been separately included in the title. Clearly, depending on length of stay, they could be classified as either settlers or visitors. This group has been highlighted, it being intended to demonstrate the important role that Portsmouth has played, and continues to play, in sheltering such individuals from a range of horrific experiences. Among them can be included Marc Brunel, frequently described as an émigré, a term that seems to deny his real purpose in leaving France, that of escaping the guillotine.

By its very nature, this paper provides a brief background to all of the main distant and overseas communities that have found their way to Portsmouth. Both now and in the past, there have been other smaller communities resident in the city. Space limits have meant that not all of these have been included. However, there is a place for individual or small group memories of those from less sizeable communities, Portsmouth Museums and Records Service currently building a collection of oral taped interviews.

In the Time of the French Wars

If there is any period in which Portsmouth could be considered truly cosmopolitan, it is the period marked by the French wars, in particular those fought against the revolutionary government and the Emperor Napoleon (1793-1815). As both a naval port and a military town, Portsmouth witnessed the frequent comings and goings of many foreign nationals. For the most part, these were men in service; some from naval ships in the harbour while others were from the numerous regiments that were either defending Portsmouth or boarding transport ships in the harbour. Forming a much closer connection with the town however, were the families of those soldiers and sailors, together with the merchant community that served their needs.

While many of those so far mentioned had freely placed themselves in a position that had brought them to Portsmouth, this was not so with regard to one very large group of foreign nationals. These were the captured enemy soldiers and sailors that were held on board a number of floating prisons moored in the harbour. In reality, these prisons were hulked warships that had been rapidly converted by the dockyard. Admiralty records show, for 1798, that there were six prison hulks then moored in the harbour and, between them, they held 971 Dutch seamen, 750 West Indians, 389 officers from privateers (presumably French, Spanish and Dutch) and 264 boys.[5] In April 1801, by which time numbers had declined, 426 Spanish and 1,182 French populated the prison hulks.[6]

For the permanent residents of Portsmouth, the housing of captive foreign seamen in times of war became a matter of continual curiosity. For many, it would have been the first

Prison hulks in Portsmouth Harbour, one of many versions of this view by Louis Garneray. The artist was a French-born seaman who had been incarcerated on board these hulks following his capture in the West Indies during 1806. A highly intelligent and gifted individual, he kept himself fully occupied during his years of capture, making small amounts of money from the painting of portraits for the officers of the hulks and visiting members of the public. Garneray wrote a detailed account of his life on board the hulks, published in 1861 under the title, Mes Pontons.
(Portsmouth Museums & Records Service, 34/1951)

time that they had seen foreign-born nationals. Even Americans captured during the War of Independence (1775-83) had stirred considerable interest, with one local resident heard to gasp, 'Why, Lord neighbours; the Americans be white people; they talk just as us do, by my troth'.[7] In a diary entry for 19 July 1778, one of these American seamen wrote down: 'Very hot weather. Great number of both sexes here today to see the American monsters'.[8]

Of the many prisoners sent to Portsmouth during the various wars of the late 18th century, one group stands out. These were black prisoners of African Caribbean background, who found themselves subjected to a great deal of racial prejudice. In 1796, approximately 700, mainly soldiers who had fought with the French, were brought to Portsmouth as a result of the successful campaign against French-held islands in the West Indies. For them, imprisonment at Portsmouth proved a terrible experience, a result of the harsh weather conditions that welcomed their arrival. In one of the coldest winters of the century, with the Thames in London freezing over, many were rendered permanently crippled by the loss of toes and fingers, with some 'deprived of both feet'.[9]

At the outset of winter, the authorities had hoped to avoid problems by issuing these men, described as 'West Indian prisoners, Mulatto and Black', with additional clothes in the form of 'a flannel under waistcoat and thick pair of yarn socks'.[10] Despondently, in December 1796, this was described as 'of little avail to defend them from the inclemency of the climate'. Part of the problem was the attitude of white European prisoners who appear to have treated their black comrades as sub-human. According to a report by a Commissioner of the Transport Office, the body responsible for overseeing captive enemy seamen, the black prisoners were 'robbed and plundered by the European Prisoners, they consider themselves as a superior race of being, to the unfortunate Blacks who in general seem to have their mental and bodily faculties benumned [sic] and stupified by the severity of the weather'.[11]

British naval warships returning to Portsmouth at the end of any period of hostility also contained varying numbers of black seamen. Of ships that had operated in European waters, the number was often insignificant. However, with ships that had served in the Caribbean, it was not unusual for a high proportion of the crews to have originated in the West Indies. One such vessel was *Prince William*, a 64-gun battleship that decommissioned at Portsmouth during the summer of 1783. Her muster book records that of a crew of approximately 500, more than 100 (20 per cent) had been recruited in the West Indies, mostly from the islands of Antigua, Barbados and St Kitts.[12] The significance of this for Portsmouth was that these discharged West Indians (often former slaves who had no intention of returning to the Caribbean) had little choice but to remain and possibly settle in Portsmouth, this being one of the few English towns with which, through their naval connections, they had any familiarity.

However, it was not just those born in the West Indies who may have settled in Portsmouth during various post-war decommissionings. British ships serving in any theatre of activity had crews dominated by those born in the British Isles, with the largest single group normally emanating from England. Of others born in the British Isles, however, those from Ireland usually formed the second largest proportion. Lt John MacKenzie, writing in 1786, estimated that Irish seamen made up approximately 15 per cent of the total number in the Royal Navy during the American War (1775-83).[13] To make sense of this figure, it should be added that the Royal Navy, during

A detail of the engraving of Portsmouth Point by the famed artist and caricaturist Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827). Of particular interest is his inclusion of the shop sign for 'Moses Levy. Money Lent', while the colourist has given black skin to the one-legged sailor playing the fiddle.
(Portsmouth Museums & Records Service, 605/1945)

this period, peaked at 100,000, with MacKenzie's estimate suggesting that there were 15,000 Irish in the Navy at that time. Others however, have considered MacKenzie's estimate to be somewhat conservative, with twice this figure having been put forward.[14] The proportion of Scots, on the other hand, is generally agreed to be much lower, probably closer to 5 per cent, so peaking at 5,000.[15] Of vessels decommissioning at Portsmouth, few would have conformed to such proportions. Some, indeed, had on board noticeably higher proportions of Irish- or Scottish-born crewmen. One such vessel was *Egmont*. Held at the Spithead anchorage during the summer of 1783, with her crew waiting to be discharged, she had on board 250 men born in Ireland, representing slightly over 40 per cent of her total crew.[16] In contrast, *Ganges*, which paid off at Portsmouth in February 1783, had on board 68 (12.4 per cent) Irish and 33 (6 per cent) Scots.[17] While it is tempting to suggest that some of these discharged seamen, of whatever nationality, chose to stay at Portsmouth, there is no definite evidence. In many cases they would only have been brief visitors adding to the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city.

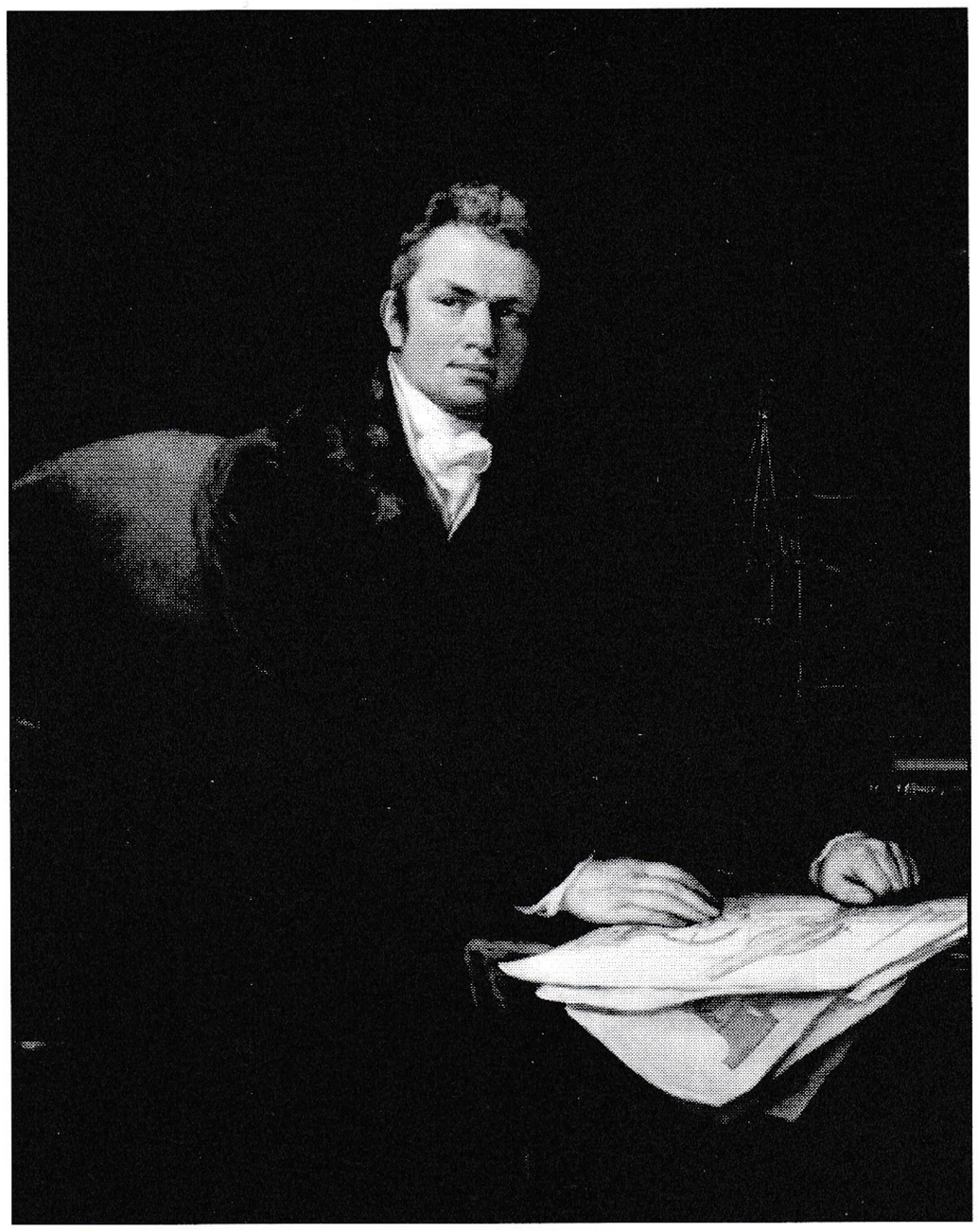
As well as seamen, Portsmouth also witnessed a diverse mix of soldiers entering the town during the period 1770 to 1815. Unlike ships of the Royal Navy, regiments of the British Army were often sharply defined by geographical origin. This can be seen through the recruitment of county regiments, but within the ranks of any one regiment (particularly after it had seen any period of service) a large number of foreign-born nationals might normally be found.[18] As well as regiments specifically generated from within the British Isles, a number of additional regiments were entirely associated with non-British nationals. Among these were foreign treaty troops such as the Hessian and Hanover battalions. These were not infrequently directed to Portsmouth. In 1756, for instance, battalions from these regiments formed part of the area's defence at the time of possible foreign invasion. In later years, Hessian and Hanoverian troops were again to be seen in Portsmouth, often brought here for the purpose of joining troopships.

James H. Thomas in an earlier Portsmouth Paper mentions a further contribution to Portsmouth's ethnic mix. He makes the point that the harbour, especially during the late 18th century, was rarely free of foreign merchant ships. According to Thomas, the port area was seemingly overwhelmed by the 'presence of Europeans, Russians, North Africans of various hues', and he suggests that 'there must have been times when it would have been impossible to hear English actually being spoken' there. Although he mentions few specific names, particular reference is made to the Lindgren family. The senior member, Andrew, was a Swedish iron ore merchant who, until his death in 1783, lived in Broad St. His son, also named Andrew, was the local agent of the East India Company and became a partner in a local bank. However, in having such strong connections with Portsmouth, the Lindgrens were doubtless the exception rather than the rule.[19]

Contributing to the multiplicity of languages spoken around the Hard were those who belonged to a not inconsiderable Portsmouth-based Jewish community. Mainly composed of first or second generation eastern Europeans, its members concentrated entirely upon the needs of the ordinary seamen of the Navy. The founder of this community has been indentified as Benjamin Levy, originally of Wiesbaden, who began trading at the corner of Union and Queen St sometime around 1742. Later joining him were Lazarus and Mordecai Moses, emanating respectively from Furth and Konigsberg. They were itinerant peddlers, with Portsmouth much suited to mobile trading. At that time, seamen were rarely given shore leave, it being common practice for traders to take a small boat into the harbour and board newly-arriving warships. In February 1758 this led to a dramatic tragedy. Twelve Jewish traders returning from the 60-gun *Lancaster* were drowned, their hired boat overturned by a sudden squall. Only one survived, Samuel Emanuel of College Rd, Portsea, ancestor to a future mayor of the town.[20]

In parallel with their trading role, many of these Jewish tradesmen offered an important financial service. They acted as bankers, ensuring that ordinary seamen received monies due to them while also providing them with loans and goods on account. It was a service that resulted from the system used for paying seamen. In place of cash, the government issued tickets and vouchers, these exchangeable at a later date. For this reason, with money constantly owed to them, ordinary seamen were rarely in a position to make immediate purchases. Instead, they relied heavily upon the port's traders, often exchanging their wage tickets or prize money vouchers for cash and goods in hand.

The system was open to considerable abuse. For one thing, no trader would accept tickets or vouchers unless at a considerable discount. Furthermore, some traders attempted



Marc Brunel, a royalist sympathiser, was forced to leave France in 1793, eventually arriving in Portsmouth where he pioneered the use of all-metal machinery for the mass production of pulley blocks for the Royal Navy. One of his machines is in the background of this portrait, painted 1813.
(© National Portrait Gallery, London, 978)

to defraud their customers, forging documents to indicate that they had paid much higher sums than was actually so. Among those found guilty of such practices were Jewish merchants. In December 1802, Judah Jacob, a slop seller of Portsmouth, was found guilty of defrauding Peter Williams of over £200 of prize money, through forging documents that appeared to show that Williams had received payments of £250. In reality Williams had received only £27 10s.[21] Other merchants, both Jews and non-Jews, discounted the tickets and vouchers at phenomenally high rates, and far in excess of the permissible 6d in the pound established by law in 1758.

Although only a small minority of Jewish traders acted in this way, the whole community was stigmatized. A number of contemporary accounts of the town reflect this opinion, suggesting that all Jews were grasping rogues out to cheat Jack Tar; among them is this account of Jewish traders on board a warship in Portsmouth harbour:

> They are furnished with every article that will rig out a sailor, never omitting, in their parakins, a fine large watch and appendages, all warranted, and with which many an honest tar has been taken in; they can supply them likewise with fashionable rings and trinkets for their ladies, of pure gold. Oh! Nothing can be purer! Yet with all Mordecai's assertions, its purity may be doubted.[22]

Despite such treatment, Jewish tradesmen were determined to become accepted members of the local community. In November 1796, upon formation of the Portsea Loyal Independent Volunteers (created to defend the town in the event of an invasion) Jews found themselves excluded. Jacob Levi, a grocer and pawnbroker of Queen St, on behalf of himself and the congregation of Jews within the town, wrote to the Secretary of War questioning this decision. In reply, Pitt not only agreed to the admission of Jews into the Portsea Volunteers but also explained the reason for the original decision. It had been taken because there had been 'a great number of suspicious itinerant Jews' living in the town. As a result of 'the activity and vigilance of the Magistrates', Pitt added they had been removed from the area, so leaving the 'Respectable Tradesmen' who were considered 'good loyal subjects'.[23]

Another means by which the Jewish community proved its loyalty and value to the Portsmouth community was in the giving of charitable donations. These were frequently made, with two instances worthy of note. In September 1811 the Portsmouth synagogue in White's Row collected over £20 for the relief of British prisoners in France.[24] A few months later, in January 1812, the congregate body of the synagogue voted £30 to be given for the relief of the orphans and suffering relatives of three recently-lost British naval ships.[25]

It was these same years that also brought to Portsmouth some of its earliest asylum seekers. Of these, the largest single group to arrive in the Portsmouth area were approximately 700 Catholic priests. They were part of a larger number who had been expelled from France following their failure to accept direct government control of the Church. To provide for their needs, the British government in 1792 made accommodation available at Forton, the priests remaining there until 1794. At that time they were removed to Winchester, some of the local Portsmouth population having expressed fears of possible collusion between the priests and the numerous prisoners of war also being held on the Gosport side of the harbour.[26]

This huge influx of Catholic priests had relatively little impact upon the town, if only because they were present in the area for such a short period of time. However, a few of their number were to return, subsequently serving the needs of the local Catholic population. Most significant of these was the Revd François de la Rue, who became the mission rector at Portsea in 1806. At one stage the Revd le Marchand, another exiled priest who eventually left Portsmouth in 1819, helped him.[27]

Of all the exiles of this period, it was not a priest but Marc Isambard Brunel, an engineer, who was to have perhaps the greatest impact upon Portsmouth. Brunel was responsible for designing machinery for the manufacture of pulley blocks for the Royal Navy, the machinery subsequently installed in the dockyard and proving highly cost effective.

It was to supervise the installation of the machinery that Brunel came to Portsmouth and it was here that his first son, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, was born on 9 April 1806. Isambard was to gain even greater fame than his father, the architect of both the *Great Eastern* steamship and Great Western Railway. As far as Portsmouth is concerned, the birth of Isambard Brunel in the city can hardly be forgotten, with a

major thoroughfare, a primary school and several buildings named either after him or some of his works. As for his father, whom Portsmouth appears to have forgotten, the block mill at Portsmouth was merely the beginning of a long and successful programme of engineering works. He went on to design a revolutionary wood mill, which was constructed at Chatham dockyard, while his most famous contribution to the world of engineering was the first Thames tunnel. However, another one of his inventions should not pass unmentioned, this a machine for manufacturing boots. He designed it in Portsmouth after witnessing the terrible state of the footwear of troops returning from the Battle of Corunna.

Yet it would be wrong to view Brunel's experiences of Portsmouth in the entirely upbeat manner so far adopted. Hopefully Marc Brunel took with him fond memories of the town – but it might not have been easy. After all, he was an asylum seeker and it was not something he could easily forget. He had been born in France, the country with which Britain was then at war. Constantly he met animosity and suspicion. The Admiralty, who were so much to benefit from the huge savings produced by his machinery, never let him forget that he was an alien. Alone of all those employed on the block making machinery, he was forced to carry a pass to enable him to enter the dockyard. All others passed through the gate with a simple nod of the head.[28]

Further French asylum seekers who sought a home in Portsmouth were Henry William Charpentier and the Arnaud family. The former was a printer and lithographer who had established a shop in Portsea before moving to the High St in 1827. Both shops sold a range of artists' materials while offering an extensive engraving and printing service. Of particular note was that Charpentier also published a number of local guidebooks.[29] Regarding the Arnaud family, Elias, whose memorial can be found in the cathedral, was a collector of taxes at Portsmouth, before a move to Liverpool where he fulfilled the same office.[30] When the Portsmouth & Portsea Fishery was established in 1796 to create jobs, both Elias Arnaud and Elias Bruce Arnaud were among the subscribers.[31]

Spanish and Polish Asylum Seekers of the Early 19th Century

A further wave of asylum seekers came to Portsmouth during the 1830s, the two largest groups emanating from Poland and Spain. In several respects the two differed considerably. Whereas the Poles came from a relatively poor background and were often illiterate, most of those from Spain were described as coming from either that nation's 'first families' or were servants of those same families.[32] Politically, also, the two groups were very different, the Poles had been seeking to create an independent country with a democratic constitution while those from Spain represented an extreme reactionary faction that favoured a return to near-absolute monarchy. Finally, whereas one group was to remain in Portsmouth permanently, the other was to stay for only a short period of time.

The Spanish, the first of these two groups to arrive in Portsmouth, were supporters of Don Carlos, Pretender to the Spanish throne. In 1833 upon the death of his brother, King Ferdinand VII, Don Carlos claimed succession to the throne, overriding the rights of the deceased king's daughter, Isabella. The resulting conflict was to last seven years, with Don Carlos initially forced to flee the country in May 1834. It was upon this occasion that both he and his family, together with a large group of retainers, arrived in Portsmouth. This was through the services of the Royal Navy, Don Carlos arriving in Portsmouth on board the British 74-gun warship, *Donegal.* Taking up residence at Ranger's Lodge in the High St, Don Carlos himself remained in Portsmouth for only a few days. Instead, he travelled to London where he attempted to raise further money for his cause. He left behind him in Portsmouth his wife, Maria-Francesca, and a 200-strong retinue of family members, nobles and personal servants. Some eventually moved the short distance to Alverstoke, where Maria-Francesca had been offered accommodation in the rectory. However, the size of this building was inadequate for such a large party. As many as 50 remained in Portsmouth, with an additional 120 officers belonging to Don Carlos' army. Soon, however, a dramatic turn of events took place, Maria-Francesca contracting a serious illness that, on 4 September 1834, claimed her life.

Of those who had remained with Maria-Francesca, several quickly moved to London. A much larger number, being without financial support, were forced to stay in Portsmouth and were soon close to destitution.[33] The Portsmouth *Herald* made this plea for their cause: '... the daily existence of 200 souls, at such a season as would appear to be approaching must present the case as a proper one for very extended benevolence – it requires more aid than our locality can supply'.[34] Eventually, it was reported in the *Hampshire Telegraph* of 15 November that all the Spanish refugees, excepting those belonging to the household of Don Carlos, were removed to London. Unfortunately, no further information is given as to how this was carried out, nor how long the remaining party stayed in Portsmouth.

The Polish asylum seekers arrived in Portsmouth in January 1834. In 1795 Poland had ceased to be an independent country, its land area divided and separately governed by Austria, Russia and Prussia. Over the years, strong nationalist sentiments had been fermenting, especially within that area of Poland governed by Russia. Here, in 1830, the Tsarist administration was removed and a provisional Polish government established. The Russians, however, refusing to recognise Polish rights, resorted to military force. In February 1831, their army not only crushed the revolution but also exacted a ferocious revenge. For many, the easiest way of escape was by crossing the Prussian border where they received temporary asylum. However, they were not able to remain on Prussian territory for more than a short while, the government forcibly sending them on to America. For this purpose, towards the end of 1833, two seagoing vessels, *Union* and *Marianne*, were chartered to carry soldiers who had fought in the recent uprising. En route, because of severe storms both vessels entered English ports, the *Union* taking shelter at Harwich and the *Marianne* at Deal. The latter ship

remained only a few days before proceeding to Portsmouth, arriving on 5 January 1834. On board both *Union* and *Marianne* mutinies broke out, those on board refusing to continue their journey. While those on the former decided to enlist in the French Foreign Legion, the 212 on *Marianne* determined upon remaining, entering into negotiation with the authorities. On 14 February 1834 they were allowed on shore where they were given immediate accommodation in a local barracks.[35] Although some of the Poles later moved to London and a few to Jersey, the majority remained in Portsmouth.

The new arrivals were determined to make the best of their situation, seeking out employment, companionship and a degree of independence. To help them, each was granted a small government pension. The amount varied according to status, with officers receiving £3 per month and ordinary soldiers £1 1s. A report in the London *Times* in August 1834, ascribed to a traveller passing through Portsmouth, provides an interesting, if seemingly over-romanticised insight into the situation of the Poles at that time:

> A building, formerly a hospital, is assigned to them by the Government as barracks, where they live in harmony with each other, having elders at their head and officers of ménage – a semblance of a family … All are panting after labour, and their employers bestow on them the praises of perseverance and dexterity. If you had seen them, you would have been pleased at the neat appearance of their clothes and the respect they show to British officers when any of them happens to pass by – a reverence, which is left them from their old profession. Life in a camp has not impaired their moral feelings, and you would be pleased to see them every Sunday proceed in knots to church …[36]

Shortly after this account was published, some Poles reconsidered their decision to stay in Portsmouth. According to the *Hampshire Telegraph* in November 1834 some 36 had gone to London to board a ship for America, 37 more were expected to join them later. To help them on their way a charity, the Forensic Society, had given each man a half-a-crown.[37] Yet, the veracity of this report has to be questioned. If such numbers were leaving for America, then the total remaining in Portsmouth was far lower than other evidence indicates. To begin with, a Polish officer in Portsmouth, Frederick Starlaski, informed the *Hampshire Telegraph* that more than 200 Poles were still determined to stay, being 'animated' with the 'same spirit of patriotism which originally induced them to remain in Europe where, united in a body, and near to Poland, they may hope at some time to promote the dearest object of their existence, the liberty of their country.'[38] Furthermore, there is evidence of the continued payment of government pensions to those living in Portsmouth, this number, even as late as May 1841, standing at 125.[39]

Walter Besant provides a further glimpse into the lives of those who made up the Polish exile community. Born in 1835 and spending his early years in Portsmouth, Besant would have come into meaningful contact with the exiles during the 1840s. In essence, the situation for many of them had little altered. In his novel, *By Celia's Arbour*, he provides a description of the barracks in which many were still living: 'It was a narrow building, built of black-tarred wood, with windows at both sides, so that you saw the light quite through the house. It stood just under the walls, almost in the shade of the great elms.'[40] As for the Poles themselves, 'They were desperately poor, all of them living mostly on bread and frugal cabbage soup'.[41] The Polish community is integral to the novel, the narrator of events given the name Ladislas Pulaski and described as one of the sons of those in exile. According to Besant in his subsequently published autobiography, 'I placed him [Pulaski] under the care of a sailor's widow – a washerwoman – in order to describe the quarter; it was in Portsea, about which I rambled as a boy, looking at the odd and pretty things which the sailors brought home …'[42]

In time, many of the Poles were to find steady employment, moving into their own independent accommodation. A number also married locally, this demonstrated by the registers of the Catholic chapel in Prince St. It is here that the exiled Poles attended divine service being, to a man, Catholic. In particular, the registers record regular baptism of children born to the exiled Poles, the maiden name of the mothers also recorded. In most cases, they were British names, with the families usually remaining in Portsmouth until the end of their lives. At least two of the original group of asylum seekers were still in Portsmouth at the time of the 1881 census. They were John Caronsi (b.1792) and Stephen Stoldnivel (b.1797), both recorded as living in Lion St.

Irish Migrants of the Famine Era

Although large numbers of Irish, some probably former seamen with the Royal Navy, undoubtedly settled in Portsmouth during the 18th and early 19th centuries, it is only possible to trace, with any accuracy, the ebb and flow of Irish migration after 1841. In that year, the first modern-day census was undertaken, recording not only population numbers, but also the place of birth, age and occupation of all those living in the United Kingdom. From these records it becomes clear that Portsmouth had an Irish community that numbered approximately 500 (0.9 per cent of the town's population).[43]

Shortly after the taking of that census, Ireland was on the verge of a crisis. Between 1845 and 1850, the entire country was ravaged by famine. As a result of a series of disastrous failures of the potato crop through disease, thousands died. Of those who survived, many did so by conserving their limited savings and fleeing abroad. The majority came to Britain, most heading for the larger cities of Glasgow and Liverpool. However, the numbers leaving Ireland were quite immense, with many also reaching Portsmouth. The later census of 1851 provides a degree of evidence, showing that the number of Irish living in Portsmouth by that time exceeded 1,000.[44]

In assessing the attitude of the already existing population of Portsmouth to the new arrivals, attention needs to be given to the local press. One Portsmouth paper, *The Hampshire*

Father Robert Dolling was born in County Down. From 1885-95 he led the Winchester College Anglican mission to Portsmouth. The church he built, St Agatha's in Landport, was designed to bring Christianity into an unattractive and poverty-stricken area that possessed a substantial portion of Irish-born settlers.
(Portsmouth Museums & Records Service, 1251/1990)

Guardian, was markedly unsympathetic to the plight of the Irish, a number of editorials attacking both Irish nationals in general as well as their allegiance to Catholicism. As for the cause of the famine, this was seen as nothing less than retribution for previous 'crimes' and misdeeds committed by those of Irish birth. In the summer of 1848, with potato blight once again threatening the entire crop, *The Hampshire Guardian* unreservedly proclaimed,

> If the potato crop should fail again, it is appalling to contemplate what must be the consequence to the Irish people themselves. But we can hardly be surprised, nor ought the Irish people themselves be surprised, that they are visited afresh with the scourge of heaven, when they show by their deeds that they have not repented of their crimes. It would almost seem as if that idolatrous and blood-stained race, like the Canaanites of old, were to be clean swept from the face of the land, to make way for others who will give the glory of their blessings, not to a creature – like the Virgin Mary – but to that only Lord, who rules both heaven and earth.[45]

The 1881 census provides detail relating to the structure of the Irish community in Portsmouth. For one thing, their numbers had grown and the community was now in excess of 1,500 – this resulting from the continuous emigration that had followed the famine. As might be expected a large number of Irish-born were recorded in the census as having undertaken more menial jobs such as general labouring. However, Portsmouth was also a naval town, and a number of Irish-born residents had naval connections. Such was the case with families living in Gladstone St, Landport. Here were located 15 Irish, or Irish-connected families. The main income of two of these families was drawn from naval pensions, the Irish-born head of each having served for a number of years in the Royal Navy. In addition, a serving seaman headed two other families, with a further family having dockyard connections. Coincidentally, the existence of a number of naval pensioners, both in Gladstone St and elsewhere in Portsmouth, provides support for an earlier supposition, that Irish seamen were inclined to settle in Portsmouth upon discharge from the Navy.

The 1891 census demonstrates a further increase in the Irish-born population of Portsmouth, the number by that time having reached 3,177 (2 per cent of the town's population). However, for purposes of establishing the number of permanently resident Irish, those of Irish birth but housed in either military barracks, the military hospital or on board merchant or naval ships in harbour must be excluded.[46] Thus, a more realistic figure for the permanent Irish-born population of Portsmouth in that year of 1891 was nearer 2,000 (1.26 per cent). The preceding 10 years had seen the continuance of the earlier pattern of constant inward migration, this primarily bringing to Portsmouth unattached individuals. In other words, the new arrivals were not part of a ready-made family group, marrying only after their arrival in Portsmouth.

Distribution of Portsmouth's permanently settled Irish-born residents as recorded by the 1891 census.[47]

Census area	Total population	Total Irish-born	% of Irish-born
Tipner	6,917	86	0.96
Southsea	35,327	668	1.9
Kingston	14,738	125	0.85
Buckland	6,379	51	0.8
Fratton	13,495	79	0.6
Milton	7,365	61	0.8
Portsea	13,469	427	3.2
Portsmouth Town	5,537	195	3.5
Somerstown	6,354	70	1.1
Landport	41,888	403	0.96

The accompanying table showing the distribution of Portsmouth's first generation Irish indicates two particular area of settlement: Southsea and the Old Portsmouth/Portsea town areas. In terms of wealth and social status, these were two very different communities. That of Southsea was fairly affluent families who occupied the new and spacious houses that were a feature of this area. Often connected with government service, they included several retired or serving

Matthew Reilly, a goalkeeper for Portsmouth Football Club twice capped for Ireland, seen here (centre) in September 1900 at his wedding, held at Our Lady & St Swithun's church. Reilly (b.1874), who was from Donnybrook, Dublin, originally played Gaelic football and brought into the English game the skill of bouncing the ball while dodging other players. The officials of the FA considered this unethical and introduced a rule that only allowed four bounces. Reilly made 138 appearances for Portsmouth before moving to Dundee.
(Portsmouth Museums & Records Service, 2003/2812)

Army and Navy officers. Helping boost the number of Irish-born residents in the Southsea area was the choice of many of the wealthier families, whether of Irish or non-Irish background, to employ Irish-born domestic servants. In sharp contrast to this first group were the substantial group of Irish-born living in the slums of the Portsea and Portsmouth Town areas. Here, housing was among the cheapest and least desirable of anywhere in the country. To the Portsea-Landport area, in 1885, came Robert Radclyffe Dolling (1851-1902), an Irish-born Anglican missionary. Using money that he helped raise, he opened several schools, converted a disused Baptist chapel into a gymnasium and organised various activities for the poor. His crowning achievement however, was St Agatha's church, built in the Italianate Romanesque style, and made necessary by the increased number of communicants that were drawn to the church by his work.[48] Both the 1881 and 1891 censuses conceal one important aspect of the Irish community in Portsmouth, those who were second generation (and actually born in Portsmouth) together with those of mixed Irish parentage. The size and impact of this section of the population can only be surmised.

Jewish Asylum Seekers from Eastern Europe

A further wave of asylum seekers was to find refuge in Portsmouth during the second half of the 19th century. Mainly Jews from central Europe, they were escaping a series of pogroms that were now being unleashed with sickening frequency. In coming to Portsmouth they may have been

The two stone figureheads at first floor level that peer over Edinburgh Rd and represent Sabatino Pitassi and his wife, the owners of a once famous Italian ice cream shop.
(Author's photos)

joining a fairly sizeable community but it was one, which at that time, had entered a period of decline. Many of the larger Jewish merchants had left the city upon the termination of the Napoleonic Wars, attracted to the more prosperous northern cities. Those who remained had to rely upon considerably lower levels of government expenditure that had also brought a much-reduced dockyard and a far less active naval fleet. Nevertheless, trade directories of the period show a number of Jewish enterprises still centred upon Queen St and other roads in this area. Among them David Barnard (silversmith, 67 Hanover St), Samuel Isaacs (jeweller, 37 and 54 Havant St) and George Levy (grocer, 115 Queen St). Despite its reduced numbers, it was a community not without influence. During the middle years of the century, a number of Jews had gained election to both the town council and Board of Guardians. Emanuel Emanuel, for example, was first elected to the town council in 1841 and became the first Jewish mayor of Portsmouth. He was responsible for a number of important local reforms.[49]

The Synagogue's own records provide first hand evidence of the renewed growth rate of the community in the post-1860 period. Whereas, between 1851-60 the number of recorded births stood at 32, this number more than doubled during the following ten years, to seventy-three. This increase continued over the next four decades, peaking at 149 births during the ten-year period 1901-10. Similarly, the number of marriages also increased with an average of 1.3 per year in the 40-year period prior to 1870 and rising to an average of 2.5 per year over the next 40 years.[50] More light on these new arrivals is to be found in the census returns of 1881 and 1891, which provide evidence for the arrival of approximately 20 Polish, Russian and German Jewish families in Portsmouth between 1860 and 1891. Settling in Queen St, or the roads immediately leading off, they were frequently skilled tradesmen who had little need or desire for charity. Instead, they immediately went into business, the majority being cobblers, tailors or jewellers. Quickly to become leading members of the community, and themselves new arrivals, were Polish-born Joseph Tuckman and his wife Sarah.[51] As a minister in the Jewish faith, Joseph began taking services in the White's Row synagogue; the 1881 census gives his address as 54a Queen St.[52]

Economic Migrants from Central Europe

Away from Eastern Europe and Ireland, Portsmouth also possessed a highly visible Italian community. This high visibility was a result of its involvement in either the restaurant trade or street entertainment. In 1881, the largest single group of Italians lived in Kent St. Here, Luigi Deluchi resided with his English wife and her parents while a further nine Italians lodged at the same address. Deluchi, himself, was owner of a fried fish shop and an ice cream parlour. As for the nine Italian lodgers, all were listed as organ grinders and would have been familiar faces in the streets of Portsmouth. Another street performer of Italian origin was Themoth Paley, a bird performer, who lived with his Italian wife in Carpenter's Court, St James's St. A less successful Italian street-performer, described as a musician, was Francesco Gaposei, in 1881 languishing in Milton prison. Other Italians living in Portsmouth were Madelinar Arcani and her daughter. Both were itinerant musicians who had arrived in Portsmouth that year while Felice Alessio of the 'Sir Charles Napier' was described as a professor of music and a beer retailer.[53] By 1891, the continuing arrival of Italians into Portsmouth had seen the emergence of a distinct Italian quarter. Situated in Portsea, it was centred round New Court and Southampton Row. Here, there were no less than eight separate Italian families. In all cases, the occupations listed were either those of musician or a connection with the ice-cream trade. The 1891 census (excluding the military, hospitals and other institutions) records a total of 102 Italians living in Portsmouth. Again, music and the ice cream trade predominated, although two of Italian birth were described as shoemakers. Primarily, those Italians living in Portsmouth came

Joseph Peterson, son of a former slave, was taken from his birthplace on the Caribbean island of St Croix by employment on a luxury yacht. He settled in Portsmouth and worked in the dockyard, where he was eventually appointed to a prestigious position in the Stores Department. This would have required him to wear a suit and bowler hat. For this reason, and the fact of there being so few black men employed in the yard at this time, his three grandchildren assume that his is the solitary black face to be seen in this postcard of c.1910, showing an exodus of dockyard workers from the main gate. Just to the right of the gate is a traditionally clad eastern-European Orthodox Jew, presumably a member of the local Jewish community.
(Portsmouth Museums & Records Service, 187A/6)

from the west side of the country, in particular, Naples and Lucca.[54]

Two Italians who do not appear in the 1881 census are Sabatino Pitassi and Domenico Marchetti, both originally from Scapoli, near Isernia on the eastern side of the country. It seems likely that the two of them, friends from childhood, first moved into Portsmouth during the late 1880s, going on to establish their own separate businesses. Domenico was responsible for setting up a specialised marble and stone craft business in Copnor. On the death of Domenico, the business was taken over by his son, Adolpho, who continued to develop it, including introducing mosaic and terrazzo flooring. During the inter-war-years, and the cinema-building boom, the family business was especially busy, its fibrous plasters a notable feature of the former *Majestic* and *Shaftesbury* (both in Kingston Rd), the *Plaza* (Bradford Junction) and the *Regent* (North End). After World War Two, Adolpho directed restoration of St John's cathedral and rebuilt the Bishop's House. He died in February 1976 at Widley aged eighty-five.[55]

Sabatino Pitassi, for his part, went into the much more traditional ice cream trade, initially selling his product from a handcart. With his business rapidly thriving, he eventually opened a shop in Edinburgh Rd. Indeed the premises, although now no longer an ice cream parlour, is still easily located, two stone figureheads at first floor level peer out over the street, these representing Sabatino and his wife. It was a shop that was to gain particular fame during the early years of the 20th century, with King George V, during a visit to Portsmouth, purchasing ice cream from the shop. Having bestowed his favours on the product, Sabatino's great-granddaughter, Angela Ribbans, proudly tells of how the king then arranged for regular deliveries of this ice cream to be made to Buckingham Palace.[56]

A completely separate group of Italians arrived in Portsmouth in 1894. They were employed to undertake work on the wood flooring and marble columns of the new church of St Agatha, which was then under construction in Landport. The employment of this group was greatly resented by many of the local men who were already engaged in building the church. It was claimed that the new arrivals were not working for a proper rate of wages and there were a number of serious arguments between the groups. Whether these were underpinned by an element of racism is unclear. Matters got out of hand when, during the first week of the Italians being employed, one of them was stabbed in the hand.[57]

As well as Italians, Portsmouth also had a small number of Germans of non-Jewish descent. Once again there was an association with entertainment and the confectionary trade, but by no means exclusive of other trades. Among the 34 German-born residents of Portsmouth recorded by the 1891 census (this number excluding those whose name suggested Jewish descent) were a shipwright, doctor, needlewoman, greengrocer and hawker. In addition there were five young German women, together with another female German speaker from Switzerland, employed as tutors in larger middle class homes.[58] The single largest group of Germans were lodged in Broad St:

In 1916, although he was 43, Joseph Peterson volunteered for military service. Joining the 15th Battn, Hampshire Regt, possibly it was during the Battle of Ypres that he was exposed to the poisonous gas that eventually claimed his life. Invalided home, Peterson died at his Orange St home on 20 October 1920.
(Courtesy of Joseph Peterson's descendants)

thirteen in number, and aged between 20 and 35, they belonged to a German band. The proprietor of the lodging house was 63-year-old Henry Ludwig, a further German-born resident of Portsmouth.[59]

Of other European nationals represented in Portsmouth, the 1891 census records a small number of French, together with one Swiss family. With but few exceptions, those of French birth were teachers of the French language, giving lessons to middle class children of larger houses situated in Southsea. The six-strong Swiss family resided at 46 Kings Rd, with three of members employed as pastry cooks.[60]

Wartime Xenophobia

A particularly difficult period for foreign-born nationals in Portsmouth was World War One and the years that immediately preceded it. As a naval port with a substantial dockyard, there was a not unnatural concern that the town might be the target of enemy spies and saboteurs. However, such fears were much exaggerated, leading to the persecution of many individuals who were entirely blameless of treasonable activities. Most vulnerable were those of mid-European descent, often subjected to a xenophobic hate campaign fuelled by an increasing bitterness towards Germany. That the victims might have been of Polish or Russian background, appeared to be of little significance.

During the pre-war spy fever a number of residents of foreign birth, or thought to be of foreign birth, were reported to the authorities by those who claimed their actions to be suspicious. These reports often ended up in the files of the government's new counter-espionage unit, MO5 (eventually to become MI5). One who fell under suspicion, partly through a false assumption of him being a Polish Jew, was Harry Symonds.[61] A long-time owner of a small photographic company based in the High St, Symonds was accused of communicating with the French naval attaché in London. Also placed under suspicion were two individuals employed by K. Henri & Co, a hairdresser's of 24 Osborne Rd. A number of the employees at this particular shop, including a certain Richard Beck, were of German birth. One of Beck's assistants, a man named Schweiger, was seen wearing a wig 'over his own thick head of hair'.[62] This was sufficient for one customer to report it to the police, a clear sign of how easily a witch-hunt could be raised against those of foreign birth.

Although these accusations were petty to the extreme, the fact they were made demonstrates the increasing tension that existed in these pre-war years. Furthermore, matters were to get worse upon the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914. First to suffer at this time were Portsmouth's German residents, this irrespective of their attitude towards the war. Under the Alien Restrictions Act, passed during the first week of hostilities, all 'enemy aliens' were to be removed from Portsmouth and other 'prohibited areas'. Within a few weeks of the war being declared, more than fifty Germans, Austrians and Hungarians were forced to leave Portsmouth. While a few were interned, most went to London or other towns, such as Chichester, which were outside the prohibited area.[63] Apart from the removal of 'enemy aliens' it was also a requirement of the act that all other foreign-born residents of the town should be registered. According to T.E. Davies, the town's Chief Constable, this resulted in 700 individuals applying for immediate registration. Those failing to make an application were liable to six months imprisonment or a £100 fine.[64]

For those 'aliens' registered to remain in Portsmouth, life became much less pleasant. For one thing, they were surrounded by considerable hostility. This was evinced on the evening of 9 August when a number of shops under foreign ownership were attacked by a mob inspired by a false sense of patriotism. Among premises damaged on that occasion were 73 Arundel St (a baker's owned by Max Greenbaum, a naturalised Russian) and 55 Charlotte St (a shop owned by Jack Zei, a Russian trading under the name of Jack Jackson).[65]

One particular group of mainland Europeans who remained in Portsmouth were especially singled out for denigration. These were hairdressers, a frequently vilified group and one already subjected to the attention of the pre-war amateur spy-catchers. In August 1914 they were again placed under the microscope, with a particularly abusive letter, signed 'Not a Pro German', appearing in the *Portsmouth News* at the beginning of September 1914,

A French-speaking family, the Albertollis opened their Swiss Café at 63-65 Commercial Rd about 1900. They specialised in high-class confectionery, including the once-famed Chocolat Menier *(a product now owned by Nestlé).*
(Portsmouth Museums & Records Service, 972A/1/7)

> Sir, May I ask if you will appeal (through the medium of your paper) to those loyal English men and women who are on the side of their country to support the English hairdressers in this town instead of the detestable aliens. Some of the English hairdressers have notices in their shops that they are British. These are being abused by the alien class who have been allowed to prosper for far too long. Reading of the horrors of the war, how can anyone allow themselves to be waited on by such people?[66]

This letter did not go unchallenged. William Maurer, the local secretary of the Incorporated Guild of Hairdressers providing a reasoned response, pointing out that many of the hairdressers to whom the previous correspondent referred, although of Swiss birth, were naturalised subjects of long standing.[67] This did little to appease the anonymous 'Not a Pro German', with an even more antagonistic letter appearing a few days later,

> Sir, It has come to a pretty pass when a simple call to Englishmen to go to shops where their own countrymen attend them, should meet with opposition. Since Saturday I have been interested to make enquiry if there is any 'British Society of Hairdressers' and I find there is not as yet, but an effort is being made to form one, 'All British'.[68]

In May 1915, following the sinking of the *Lusitania,* feelings in Portsmouth were again running high. One unfortunate on this occasion was Ernest C. Euler, employed at the King's Theatre as a musician. A second-generation German, he appears to have fallen foul of his fellow-musicians in the orchestra pit. An argument had broken out over the sinking of the passenger ship, with Euler accused of saying, 'I am German and a good German also. If the English had the same chance of sinking the *Lusitania* as the Germans, they would have done it'. For these remarks he was taken to court, with the magistrates unable to determine whether he had actually used these words. It was accepted that Euler, despite his name, had been born in England – the 1881 census records him to have been born at Hutton Hill, Somerset, in 1874.[69] For this reason, no action was taken against him and he was allowed to remain in Portsmouth, although advised to leave the area for his own safety.[70]

Overseas born residents of Portsmouth had sometimes to go to a great deal of effort to prove they were not of German birth. This particularly applied to Polish and Russian Jews. One innocent victim was 42-year old Abraham Taylor, a High St tobacconist. Few believed his claim to be Russian, some perhaps remembering that he had not always been Taylor. At the outbreak of war he had changed his name from Schneider. Taken to court, with a view to removing him from Portsmouth, he was only able to save himself when Revd. H. Levenberg, recorder of the town synagogue, gave evidence on his behalf. Levenberg, who came from Kobno, the same area of Russia from which Taylor also claimed to have originated, had little doubt that Taylor did come from Russia, the latter faultlessly speaking the dialect of the district.[71]

It was not only those from mid-European backgrounds who fell foul of the authorities. The need to register was a complicated process and not always understood. In June 1915 Louis Francis Archinaird and Pierre Soliog, employees of the Pier Hotel, Southsea, one a French national and the other Swiss, were arrested in Gosport. Only registered for Portsmouth, they were unaware that in crossing over to Gosport they were in breach of the terms of their registration.[72]

This war time period also saw the arrival of a large number of overseas soldiers and sailors. Of particular significance were troops from the United States, with Milton Asylum converted into a U.S. Army field hospital. The presence of U.S. soldiers was given recognition through various officially sponsored entertainments. Among these was an 'At Home' given by the Mayor on 4 July 1918 and attended by the officers and nurses of the newly created base hospital at Milton. On that same day, Fratton Park saw a baseball match played out between members of the 170th Aero Squadron and the 33rd U.S. Base Hospital.[73] In addition to soldiers of the American Army, Portsmouth Harbour during this period was also given over to the accommodation of prisoners of war, a number of obsolete ships converted for this purpose.[74]

A Welsh Dockyard Community

The existence of the nation's largest naval dockyard at Portsmouth had an inevitable effect upon the composition of the area's population. Apart from acting as a constant magnet, attracting skilled labour into the town, there was also a frequent transfer of workers between yards. Most usually this was to meet sudden emergencies or a more general shortfall in

numbers employed. It was this general movement of workers that explains the existence in Portsmouth of a sizeable Pembroke-born community at the beginning of the 20th century. According to the 1901 census, a total of 816 (0.4 per cent of the town's population) Portsmouth residents were born in that relatively small area. Most, as it happens, were dockyard connected, the breadwinners of these numerous families having been employed, at one time or other, in Pembroke's own naval dockyard.[75]

In 1923, that particular community was to be considerably enlarged as a result of Pembroke dockyard being placed into a state of care and maintenance. Some 500 artisans and labourers from Pembroke now began to arrive in Portsmouth, members of the permanent work force at Pembroke who had been guaranteed continued employment. For many, the experience proved far from satisfactory. Confronted by a severe housing shortage, many of the new arrivals were charged excessive rents by greedy landlords. For those who wished to purchase a house, the situation was no easier. Although they might have possessed money from a house already sold, this often proved inadequate for the purchase of a house in Portsmouth. In calling for help, the Pembroke dockyard workers sent a number of petitions to the Admiralty. These appear to have been sympathetically received, with a decision taken in 1928 to release land in Hilsea for the construction of new housing. This was to be the future Dockyard Estate, a collection of 160 houses earmarked for those who had been relocated from Pembroke.

Apart from housing, the newly arrived families from Pembroke suffered a further unpleasant experience: those already living in Portsmouth did not accept them. Frequently they were seen as interlopers who were preventing others employed in the dockyard from acquiring permanent established status. In an interview given to Dr Ken Lunn of the University of Portsmouth, it was stated that crowds would sometimes assemble outside the dockyard and spit on the Pembroke-men as they left the yard at the end of the working day. One of the new arrivals also recalls that on her first Sunday visit to the city's Welsh Presbyterian chapel, she was totally ignored.[76]

To fight this animosity, the new arrivals were forced to establish a distinct community of their own. They formed the Pembroke club and organised frequent social activities for their families. One particular indictment of the situation was the need of the new community to establish its own Baptist chapel, preferring this to the already existing chapels.[77] However, the rejection of the new arrivals was not entirely universal. Among a final batch of transfers to Portsmouth was C.W. Norton-Thomas, a councillor and mayor-elect for Pembroke Dock. Within a few years he had established himself as an active member of both the local Co-operative Society and Labour Party and was eventually elected to the borough council.[78]

Another group of dockyard workers who were not treated well at this time were those from the former royal dockyard of Haulbowline. Following the handover of this yard to the newly independent Irish Free State, some thirty-nine yard apprentices were transferred to Portsmouth for the purpose of completing

Joe Davidson (1891-1968). A respected member of the Portsmouth Jewish community, he was active in both the affairs of the synagogue and in helping the poor and needy across the city. Born in Poland, he came to Portsmouth (via London) in 1913, establishing ladies and gentlemen's outfitters. In 1928 he was elected to the council and was made an alderman in 1947. He also had an interest in the leisure industry, owning the Prince's Cinema together with a skating rink and boxing hall. His concern for those in need was all embracing, providing coal and Christmas presents for the poor of his ward. During the Depression, assisted by his wife, he opened and served behind the counter of a soup kitchen in Portsea. Davidson Court, a block of flats in St George's Sq let to pensioners on low rents, was named after him. This portrait is the synagogue in The Thickett, the Southsea synagogue.
(Author's photo, courtesy of Portsmouth & Southsea Hebrew Congregation)

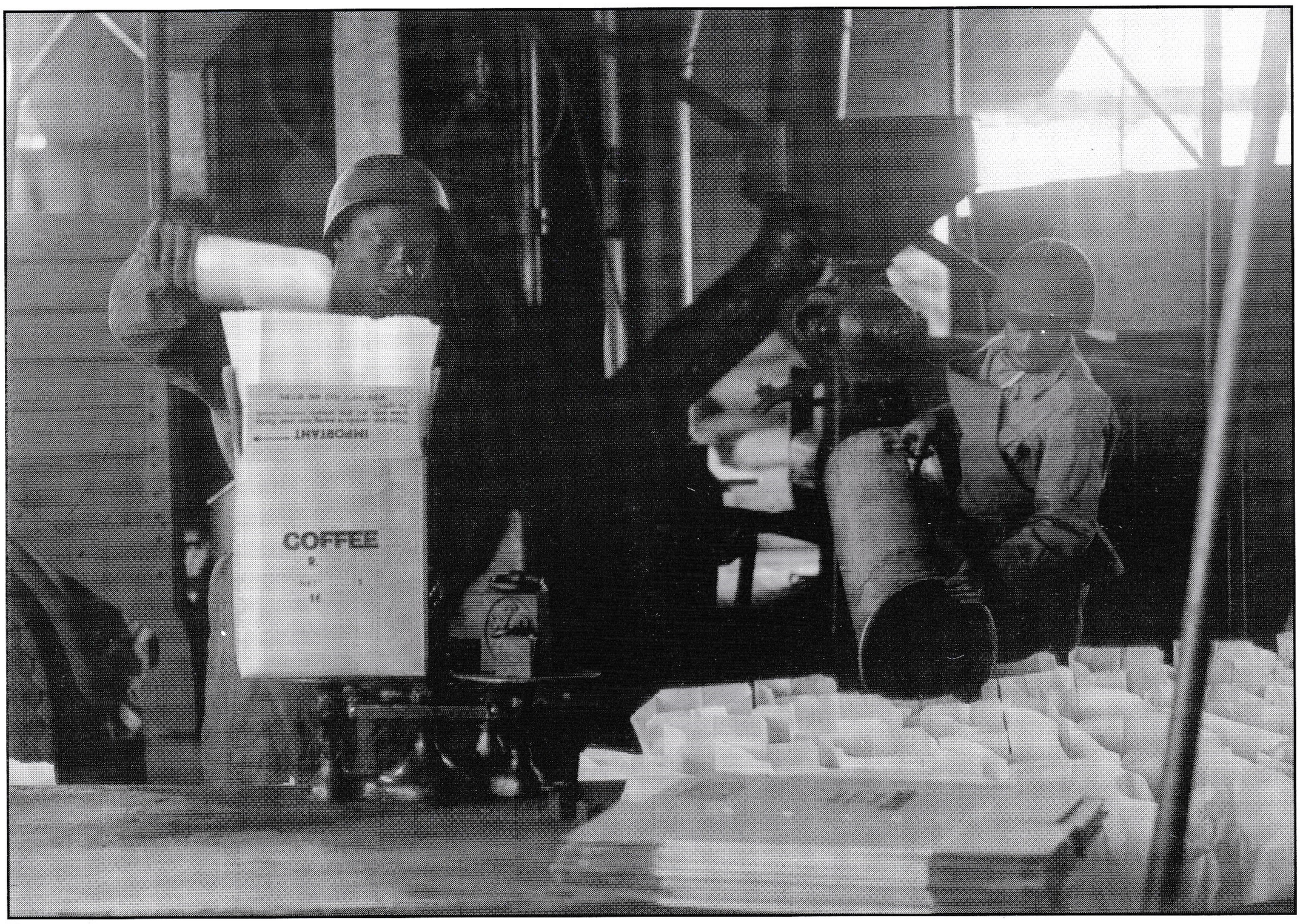
their apprenticeships. Rose Lynch, the wife of one of these apprentices, recalled the reception they received in Portsmouth, considering them to have been very shoddily treated. Fortunately, they found some solace through the Church, accepted in the social club run by the Catholic cathedral while her husband joined the St Joseph's church football team.[79]

A Jewish Experience

The Portsmouth Jewish community, which, in terms of numbers, had peaked at the beginning of the 20th century, was much reduced by the late 1930s. Sylvia Mendel (née Mack), the granddaughter of a Russian émigré, vividly recalls this period. In 1932, and aged eight, Sylvia, together with her parents, Robert and Ethel, arrived in the city. Previously they had been living in Leeds, her father an itinerant trader. Due to a serious illness, it had been decided that a move to the south would help his recovery. The choice of Portsmouth was easy, Robert had been invited to run a family ex-government store in Charlotte St.

Of those early years in Portsmouth, Sylvia recalls her father's involvement in politics. As early as 1933 Robert Mack sought election to the local council, standing on the Labour ticket. In the event he lost that first campaign but was elected for Fratton ward in 1935.[80] It was not so much his work on the council that Sylvia remembers but more his fervent opposition to fascism. While taking Sunday walks with her father and brother along the seafront at Southsea, the three would sometimes come

Soldiers of an American field bakery stationed in Paulsgrove during 1944, a photo taken for the American government.
(PMRS, 2003/659)



across open-air meetings organised by Oswald Mosley's British Union. On these occasions, Sylvia was given 2d to fetch a suitable chair upon which Robert Mack would stand. Immediately attracting the crowd's attention, his strong powerful voice would soon have that same audience fully absorbed and listening to a cogently put counter-argument.

Sylvia, prior to her move to Portsmouth, had little direct experience of Judaism as a religion. In Leeds, she had never attended the synagogue or been trained in Jewish rituals. In joining her relatives at Portsmouth, and entering an orthodox community she was expected to attend the synagogue school held at weekends while she was introduced to the Hebrew language and teachings of the faith. More significant was the decision to move the synagogue from Curzon Howe Rd (formerly White's Rowe and where it had been since 1742) to Southsea. While Sylvia remembers little about that earlier building, she does remember that the new synagogue was opened in September 1936. She also recalls that some of the treasures from the earlier building were transferred, including the stained glass windows bearing the Ten Commandments, the original ark, chandeliers and the 'everlasting light'. Although some were not happy with the move, the decision proved fortuitous. In 1940, during the Blitz, the old building, then a furniture store, was destroyed.[81]

World War Two

World War Two again created out of Portsmouth a cosmopolitan community temporarily formed of the myriad of soldiers and sailors brought to the area. Among foreign naval units operating out of Portsmouth during the early years of the war were those from France, Poland and Denmark. The subsequent build-up, prior to the Normandy landings, brought an even greater number of foreign soldiers and sailors, in particular those from Canada and the USA. In Portsmouth they were often regarded with great affection. Margaret Herridge, a school girl at this time, recalls,

> I just remember them in uniform coming down the road and the girls they were going out with looking as proud as punch that they were going out with an American, you know? And Americans had money to flash around and nylons and things like that, and some of the kids running over, 'You got any gum, chum?'[82]

Although the comings and goings of many of these overseas units can be traced through the various displays at the D-Day Museum, events relating to one particular group of foreign-born soldiers are sadly ignored. These were the black American soldiers brought to Portsmouth during the build-up to D-Day and quartered both in Portsdown school and in hutments erected

alongside Copnor Rd. For Portsmouth residents, the arrival of so many black troops caused quite a stir. Les Ford, a school boy during these war time years later recalled,

> When we first saw these black Americans, we were in awe, the first black people we had ever seen. When I say 'we' I'm talking like of myself and, you know, immediate contemporaries. It's the first black people we'd ever seen like. They were all right. They were all right. They never had that kind of money that the white Americans had.[83]

A complication was that of an inherent racist attitude emanating from many of the white American soldiers, together with their singular inability to accept that those of the host nation were not prepared to discriminate. While the American army attempted to introduce segregation the local population flouted such regulations. White American soldiers, especially those from the South, often felt a need to enforce their own southern code, attacking black soldiers when they saw them in the company of white women. Not unusually, fights broke out, Les Ford recalling an incident in Cosham High St in early 1943,

> As a kid I was outside the fish and chip shop, the fish and chip shop that is still there today, called Mays, I went there and stood, witnessed this fight ... I believe it lasted for quite some time, although I only saw it for ten minutes maybe for a quarter of an hour 'til I finished my chips, then I thought I ought to be getting back.[84]

Portsmouth was also one of the seven cities used by Mass Observation to assess attitudes during the war. A number of questions were posed relating to the presence of black-American soldiers, with respondents initially very positive and supportive. However, a change of attitude is certainly detectable, this possibly a result of the frequent aspersions directed towards black soldiers by white GI's.[85] In addition, the birth of a number of illegitimate mixed-race babies might well have compounded such views, this appearing to support an assertion of sexual promiscuity. The Mass Observation findings for Portsmouth show that many, from July 1943 onwards, regarded British females who 'dated' black GIs, as being of low morals. As for the number of mixed-race babies born in Portsmouth, the number is hard to determine. Certainly, residents at this time can recall a number of mothers of mixed race children visiting the Portsdown School, this being where the main black American contingent was based. A survey carried out by the League of Coloured Peoples, revealed that in Hampshire as a whole, a total of fifty had been born, this representing one of the highest county totals.[86]

As the war drew to a close one further influx of foreign troops came to Portsmouth. These were German prisoners of war. Many were to remain in Portsmouth even after the war had ended, employed in the building of houses to replace those that had been destroyed by bombing. As for the initial wave of such prisoners, while some had an instinctive hatred for the enemy, others saw them for what they were: young men who would rather be at home rather than fighting in a war that they had probably not wanted in the first place. Certainly, if somewhat unwillingly, they gained the sympathy of John Rogers of the Dockyard Home Guard, 'The German [prisoners] were badly shaken. They didn't say much. Having lost several friends I sort of hated them at the time, but when you saw how they were reacting, you felt sorry for them.'[87]

Post-war Portsmouth

For Portsmouth, the immediate post-war years were ones in which only a small number of visitors and settlers arrived from more distant areas of the world. One exception was a small augmentation to the city's Jewish community, with a few survivors from the Nazi death camps allowed to join relatives who were living in Portsmouth. Among them was Ray Widman who, with her husband Harry Grunstein, joined her uncle, Portsmouth councillor Joe Davidson. So grateful at this chance to begin life anew, the couple changed their name to that of Davidson.[88] Another who came to Portsmouth during the immediate post-war years was Julius Klein. Previously he had been living in Petersfield, saved from the concentration camps by the Kinder Transport. His father, a rabbi in Dussledorf, had chosen to stay with his community, even though the synagogue and a number of Jewish houses had been wrecked during *Kristallnacht*. Fortunately for the young Julius, a sponsor family was found in Petersfield and he was permitted to come to England. Remaining in Petersfield for the duration of the war, he mixed with many of the Jewish community from Portsmouth, as it was to Petersfield that many came to avoid the bombing. Following the war, Julius moved to Portsmouth, eventually to become warden of the synagogue.[89]

A very different post-war migrant to Portsmouth was Lloyd Lindbergh 'Lindy' Delapenha. Born in Jamaica, the twenty-one-year-old was Portsmouth Football Club's first black player when he made his first appearance at Fratton Park in November 1948. He remained with the club until April 1950 when he joined Middlesborough. During his two-year spell with the local team he made seven appearances, scoring one FA cup goal. Since then, Portsmouth has gone on to sign a number of African-Caribbean and African players.[90]

Furthering Portsmouth's links with the Caribbean in these post-war years was the arrival, in September 1950, of 49 apprentices from Bermuda naval dockyard. Having begun their apprenticeship in Bermuda, and with the closure of that yard, they had been offered the chance of completing their indentures at Portsmouth. Lodging with local people, their experience of Portsmouth appears to have been different from those who had come to the town some twenty-five years earlier from Pembroke and Haulbowline. In part, this can be explained by their numbers being significantly smaller and expectations that on completion of their apprenticeships they would return to Bermuda. A further factor, that of a booming economy and a plentiful supply of local employment, also contributed to their

Stan Rudder and colleagues, when he received the British Empire Medal for service in the dockyard. Stan came to Portsmouth from Barbados in 1958, and has become prominent in local cricketing circles.
(PMRS)

acceptance. In the words of Mickey Scotland, who arrived in England as a fifteen-year-old, 'we really did mingle in, just like we were born here'. In an interview recorded by Dr Ann Day, Mickey Scotland went on to add,

> I would say we were just like average English guys. Didn't take us long to get like that neither! I suppose it was the age. We were young; they were young. We were all the same age. And some of them saw each other for the first time, just like they saw us for the first time. They didn't know one another in the training centre. So we all more or less got to know one another at the same time.[91]

For the most part, the apprentices had very happy memories of this period in their lives. Regular visitors to Fratton Park while also travelling to away matches, they reserved Saturday nights for dances at either the *Embassy Club* or the *Savoy* in Southsea. Other evenings might find them at one of the many local cinemas.

Norman Gordon, a local lad whose parents provided lodgings for one of the Bermudians, later wrote an account of their stay in Portsmouth. According to him, a particular highlight was the Coronation in June 1953, when Gordon and several of the Bermudians stayed overnight in the Mall waiting to see the queen's procession on the following day. Gordon indicates that while most did return to Bermuda, a few remained in the town, having married locally.[92]

Among others from the Caribbean who also came to Portsmouth in the immediate post-war years was 'Bunty' Celestine who had first come to England as a result of enlisting for war-time service in the Royal Air Force. Following de-mobilization he entered the dockyard at Portsmouth before opening a market stall in Charlotte St. Others from the Caribbean began to settle in Portsmouth from the mid-1950s onwards. Positively encouraged by the British government to move to England where there was a shortage of workers, a few also took up employment in the dockyard. However, the number of West Indians coming to Portsmouth was never anything but small, 'I never really saw many black people when I came here. I think there was about two black families that I actually bumped into in the town in Charlotte St market!'[93] For the most part new Caribbean arrivals were well received, but there was certainly a degree of racial prejudice,

Lydia Briano, waiting in her parents' café in Guildhall Sq, Verrecchia's, in the 1960s.
(PMRS)

Portsmouth and Southsea railway station. Shortly after, a second shop was opened in Commercial Rd, but this one failed to survive the war, destroyed during an air raid. In 1946, the Verrecchias also opened a shop in North End.

While many Italians, including several who lived and worked in Portsmouth, were interned during the war, this was not the case with Augusto Verrecchia. In part, this was because he had lived in Britain for a number of years. An additional reason was that of Augusto's father having a committed loyalty to the family's new country, becoming naturalised some years before war broke out. For his part, Augusto Verrecchia joined the Royal Air Force and was employed as an interpreter for Italian prisoners at Middle Wallop.

The Verrecchia cafes, which specialised in the serving of coffee and ice cream, were undoubtedly very popular in Portsmouth. According to Lydia Briano (née Verrecchia), daughter of Augusto, who worked as a waitress in the Guildhall Square shop,

> you used to have the students come in, during the week we used to get students, and then when you didn't have the students you'd have all the holidaymakers in the summer months, so it was a very busy place every day of the week because you'd have the church on a Sunday which brought in a lot of people, plus everybody who was going out on a Sunday. [98]

I didn't really experience a lot of it. You did get the odd one or two people that called out something from across the road because they were too cowardly to walk next to you and say it, but I felt I was accepted quite well.[94]

In the dockyard, by about 1970, some fourteen West Indians were employed. Among them was Barbadian-born Frank Toppin. A further World War Two veteran, he first entered dockyard service during the late '60s and had (like his Bermudian predecessors) joined one of the local cricket teams. He did not view racism as a major problem in the yard but admitted, that as a result of National Front activity in Portsmouth, there was a degree of tension. He counselled younger black workers to ignore any taunts. The Admiral Superintendent of the yard, once he was made aware of the situation, issued an immediate circular that stated that any one found guilty of racial abuse would be immediately dismissed. According to Toppin, this brought an immediate end to the problem.[95]

As a community, those from the West Indies were able to establish their own association in Portsmouth, the Caribbean Islands Association. Still thriving, it meets once a month at the Wesley Centre in Fratton. According to Guyanean, Donna Simpson,

> We put on different functions during the year. We have dances [and] a boat trip. We call it the Caribbean boat trip but we only go round the Solent, but everybody seems to enjoy it. We do a big New Year's Eve party. We have the Royal Sailors Home Club, we have a very large turnout, usually about 300 people.[96]

Born in Portsmouth in 1960, Sonya Newton, who is of Barbadian parentage, mentions one particular problem faced by those of a West Indian background,

> Caribbean hair is coarse and very dry, and living in Portsmouth we have to have special products for our hair, which is not so bad now because there is now a shop in Portsmouth that we can go and buy things from. Before then we had to go to Southampton and, apart from that, it was London. So, when we went to London we would always stock up or, if a family member came down from London, we would always ask them to get stuff for our hair.[97]

A distinctly different community in Portsmouth at this time was one of Italian descent and based, as it had been in the 19th century, around the catering trade. In the years that immediately followed the war there were Italian cafes and restaurants in both Edinburgh Rd and next to the Theatre Royal. Undoubtedly, the most popular was a small chain of restaurants run by Augusto Verrecchia. Having been born in a small village that lay mid-way between Rome and Naples, he first moved to Glasgow before settling in Portsmouth during the 1930s. In 1933 he established his first café, this situated opposite

Another arm to the Verrecchia enterprise, and developed during the immediate post-war years, was the building up of a fleet of ice-cream sales vans. Very much a seasonal business, those employed in this side of the business were often temporary migrants from Italy. Again, Lydia Briano explains,

> We used to get the drivers over from Italy in those days. They used to come over because the younger generation obviously in those days didn't have the work. My father used to bring them over in the summer: the summer months to work. We used to put them up, give them lodgings above the shop. They used to come over and we had six at a time and one or two English.[99]

The redevelopment of Guildhall Square and the shops in the immediate area led to the forced closure of the Verrecchia café. Admittedly Augusto was given the right to re-open the shop when the rebuilding project was completed, but it was considered that the financial outlay would be too much. By that time the Verrecchias had begun to specialise in the manufacture of ice cream. It was a connection with Portsmouth that was to continue until November 2005, the family firm then forced to close its doors due to a new generation of the family wishing to develop their talents elsewhere.[100]

A further community established in Portsmouth during the immediate post war years was from Malta. Charles Triccas explained his reason for coming to Portsmouth,

> In 1951 I came to England. I registered at the Labour Exchange in Lake Rd. I came to England because, at that time, after the war, the population of Malta was growing and the government requested volunteers to emigrate to Australia, or wherever. I came to Portsmouth because my brother was here … and everyone used to say it was a good place; they [Portsmouth Football Club] used to win the championship.[101]

In common with a number of other Maltese he obtained work in the dockyard. Having a good command of English, the Maltese were readily accepted and easily adapted to their new lifestyle. They formed their own social club, 'The Malta Centre' (but not based on any particular building) and arranged trips and dances. In addition, the young men formed their own football team, named 'Melita' (the Roman name for Malta). Playing in red and white (the national colours of Malta), it entered the North End league. With all its players employed in the yard, it was later renamed 'Maltese Cross' and affiliated to the dockyard football league.[102]

The Late Twentieth Century

It is from the mid-1950s onwards that it is possible to identify the origins of Portsmouth's three largest modern-day settled minority ethnic communities: those from the Punjab, China and Bangladesh. Of these, the Punjabi is the smallest, numbering approximately five hundred. Giving it particular homogeneity is religion, the overwhelming majority being Sikh. Kirpal Singh, an early settler in Portsmouth, worked as a door-to-door salesman. At that time, Kirpal estimated, there were only about four other Sikh families in the area. From those early days as an itinerant salesman, selling clothes and fabrics (some of which were imported from India), he went on to open an international food and grocery store in Albert Rd.

A factor that encouraged Sikh settlement in Portsmouth was the royal dockyard. During the late '50s and '60s there was rarely a problem in obtaining work in the yard. A number of Sikhs confirm that on being advised of vacancies, they moved to the city and were transferred into the yard via the Labour Exchange and a brief dockyard interview. As a result, Sikhs born in the Punjab were to be found undertaking a variety of tasks, several employed as slingers, labourers and store men.[103]

In his own right, Kirpal Singh was an important member of this small community. It was due to his hard work and influence that the Sikh gudwara and community centre in Margate Rd was established, while in 1996 he became vice-president of the national Sikh society. Kirpal Singh was orthodox in his belief and, prior to his death in 1998, could often be seen in his traditional robes with a ceremonial sword under his clothes.[104]

An important landmark for the Chinese community in Portsmouth was the opening, during 1964, of Portsmouth's first Chinese restaurant, the *Great Mountain* in Kingston Rd (opposite the Eastern Stores).[105] The man responsible was David Yau Lai, a relative newcomer to the city. No more than 20 years of age, he had left Hong Kong in 1959, joining a restaurant-owning uncle who lived in Bristol. Initially employed as a waiter, it soon became apparent that the young man had considerable talent. Following a series of moves that took him to Sheffield, Winchester and Southampton, David was offered, during the early 1960s, the chance of opening his own restaurant in Portsmouth, his uncle loaning him the necessary capital. At the time, Portsmouth probably had less than 50 Chinese speakers. The opening of the *Great Mountain* certainly attracted a number of others into the area, if only because the new restaurant required a trained chef and table waiters. Over the next few years, and riding on the coat tails of the *Great Mountain*, other restaurants were opened, these included the *Shining Star* and the *Bamboo House*, both in Southsea. A further development came in 1970 with the opening of the *Yangtze River* just off New Rd. This counts as Portsmouth's first take-away Chinese restaurant, the proprietor Lee Ho Lai, a cousin of David Yau Lai. In the meantime David, himself, had widened his scope of activities by opening the Eastern Stores, a wholesale outlet (now a supermarket) that supplied the numerous Chinese restaurants in and around Portsmouth.[106]

The rapid development of the Chinese restaurant trade in Portsmouth was not unconnected with the city's strong links with the Navy. Many of those who served had developed a taste for Chinese food, this often the result of a short stint of service in Hong Kong. However, as David Lai recalls, these seamen could also be a considerable problem for Chinese

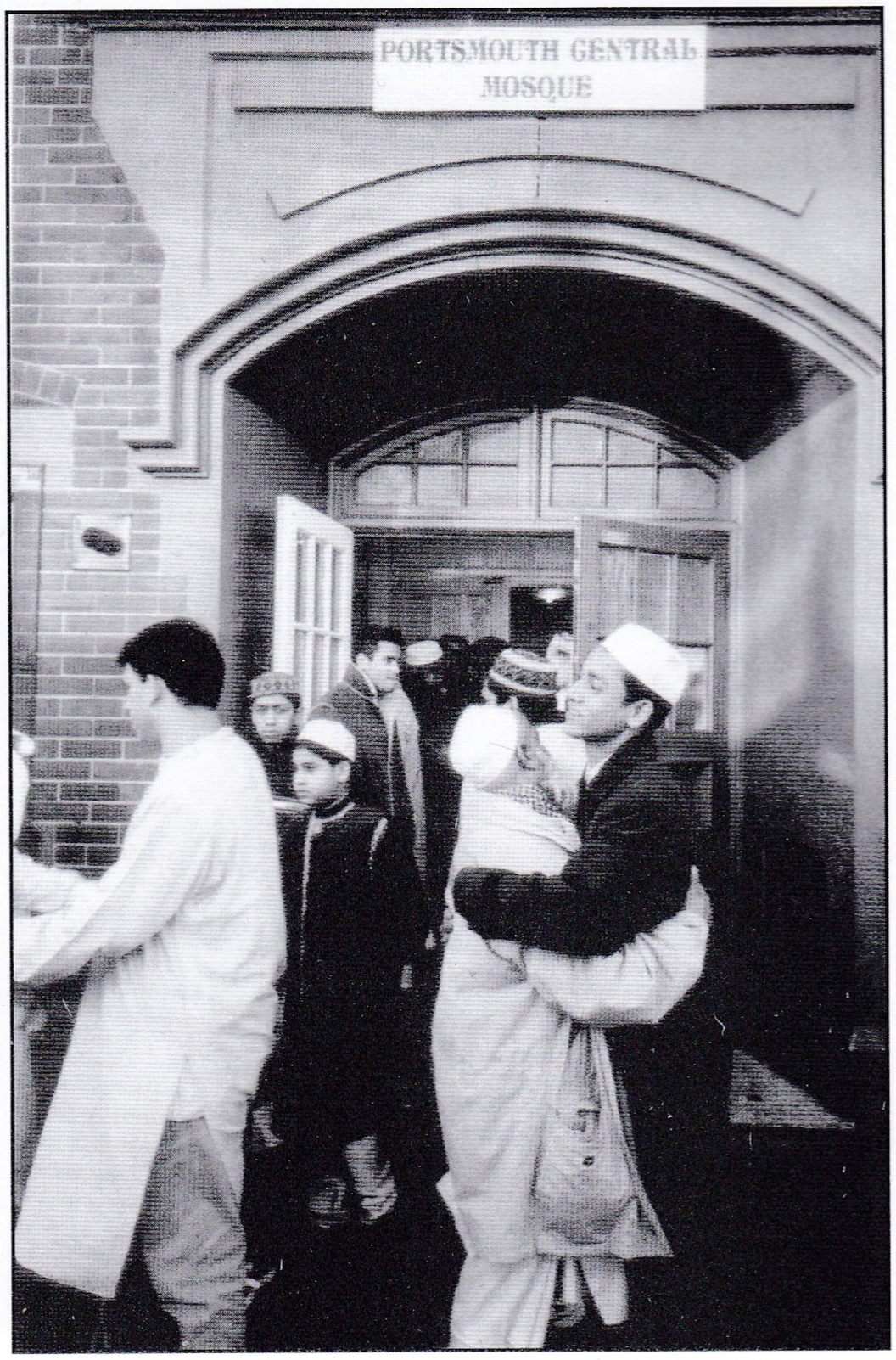
Typical of those who came to Portsmouth during the 1990s was Guo Zhen He (also known as Jane Ho), seated here second lady from the right. Born in mainland China, her father had been a supporter of the anti-communist Guomindang (Nationalist) party led by Chiang Kai-shek. While her family felt relatively safe in the China of the 1950s, matters dramatically changed with the onset of Mao Zedong's 'Cultural Revolution' in 1966. Fleeing to Hong Kong, they settled in the New Territory before Jane joined relatives in Portsmouth in 1990. At that time it was relatively easy for her to get employment, initially working in the kitchen of the Chinese-run Golden Fish Bar (now Hong Kong Tea Bar) in Commercial Rd.
(PMRS)

restauranteurs, as occasionally they would attempt to avoid payment by running out of the restaurant. More serious, and racist in its overtones, was the occasionally made suggestion that some of the dishes served, especially chicken curries, had a feline content. To David Lai, this was always a ridiculous accusation and, to any health inspector, he would simply suggest they use their common sense, pointing out that chicken was one of the cheapest meats available while cat was particularly expensive to acquire. He further suggests the origin of this accusation, noting that a traditional remedy to counter male impotence and which originated in China, combined snake, cat and chicken.[107]

A further landmark for the Chinese community in Portsmouth was the establishment of the Chinese Association. Formed in June 1980 by a group of 22 local and neighbouring Chinese, its primary concern is that of helping the underprivileged within the Chinese community. The first chairman was David Yau Lai, whose Eastern Stores was also venue for the earliest meetings of the association. David Lai remained chairman for seven years, succeeded by Kai Ming Lai in 1993. At the time Kai Ming Lai was owner of the *Centre Restaurant* in Edinburgh Rd, with meetings of the Association being held at his restaurant. To provide a more permanent meeting place was the object of a special committee that was established in 1989. This set about raising the necessary funds, drawing upon donations from the local community and those living elsewhere, both in the UK and Hong Kong. Eventually, the work of the committee was crowned with success, the association able to purchase 208 Kingston Rd. Within these premises, members feel more at home, organising a wide range of events that includes a lunch club, a *mah jong* club, a karaoke club, calligraphy and language classes. Alternatively, and as a result of the continued growth of the Chinese community in Portsmouth, a number of larger scale activities are held either at Friendship House (Elm Grove) or at Mayfield School where there is both a Sunday school and an active Chinese classic dance club.

Significantly larger than any other single ethnic minority in Portsmouth is that composed of those of Bangladeshi descent. In total, and according to the 2001 census, this community numbers approximately 2,600 (1.4 per cent of Portsmouth's population). It is a community that also has strong links with the restaurant trade, the *Taj Mahal* in Albert Rd being the first Bengali restaurant in Portsmouth. Opened by Habibur Rahman Choudhury sometime around the year 1956, the *Taj Mahal* clearly pre-dates the main Bengali settlement in Portsmouth.

At the heart of the Portsmouth Muslim community are the two mosques in the city. The photo left shows worshipers in the Bradford junction mosque, a former cinema that was taken over by the Muslim community in 1999, that on the right shows formal greetings being exchanged outside the Portsmouth Central Mosque in Somers Rd North, opened in 2001.
(PMRS, photos by Habibur Rahman, 2003/2582 & 2568)



Originating from Sylhet, and aware that sailors with the Royal Navy and who had served in India had acquired a taste for curries, Habibur Choudhury saw an opportunity providing this delicacy in one of their main hometowns. In turn, other restaurants soon followed, among them *The New Taj Mahal* (c.1959) in Kingston Rd, *The Green Mask* (c.1960) in Osborne Rd, *The Calcutta* (c.1961) and *The Himalaya* in Charlotte St (c.1963).[108]

A further generation of restaurant owners came to Portsmouth during the 1970s, many of them joining friends and relatives, taking over established restaurants. Among this group was Abdul Hye Chowdhury. Born in what was then East Pakistan, he first came to London as a student in 1966. It was only then that he first worked in a restaurant, employed during his student years as a waiter in South Kensington. In 1970, on completing his degree, his brother-in-law, the owner of the *Kohinoor* in Albert Rd, invited Abdul to join him in a business partnership that continued until 1984. In that year, Abdul branched out on his own, establishing, in Eastney Rd, the *Eastney Tandoori*. Abdul likes to make clear that while his, and other restaurants in Portsmouth are usually referred to as 'Indian', there are no 'Indian' restaurants in the city. Instead, those who originate from the Sylhet region of Bangladesh own them all.[109] When Abdul Hye Chowdhury first arrived in Portsmouth, there were relatively few from his homeland living in the area. In fact, he arrived in the city at a point where the community was about to expand, a result of Bangladesh's war of independence (1971). Considerable destruction to property and damage to the new country's infrastructure, forced many to leave the area.

It is this same Bangladeshi community, through its total commitment to the Islamic faith that became the prime mover in the creation of Portsmouth's first mosque. This was not until 1973. Prior to that date, Gyas Uddin, the owner of a further restaurant, *The Light of Bengal* in Osborne Rd, had set aside one of the rooms in his restaurant to allow the faithful to meet together in prayer. Overseeing the prayer arrangement at *The Light of Bengal* was an already established Muslim society. It was members of the society's committee that took the initiative by looking for suitable purchasable properties. Eventually they determined on 73 Marmion Rd, previously a private dwelling that was on sale for £7,000. This, for the day, was quite a sizeable sum and could only be met by numerous donations and the raising of a bank loan. As security for the

loan, Abdul Bari Choudhury, who became the mosque's first president, gave the deeds of his restaurant, the *Taj Mahal* in Albert Rd. Apart from purchase of the house, further money had to be spent on its conversion: the ground floor had to be fully opened out for purposes of worship while office space, a room for the imam and a large washing area had also to be created. Finally, a separate washroom had to be set aside for receiving of the dead prior to burial in the cemetery at St Mary's.[110]

In the space of about ten years, this newly created mosque, known as the Jami (or Friday Prayer) Mosque, was itself needing to be enlarged. Fortunately, at that time the adjoining house, 75 Marmion Rd, had been placed on the market, with the committee purchasing it for £23,000. Again, conversion work was necessary, the two houses linked to form one ground floor unit for common prayer.

Those of the Bengali community who lived in Portsmouth during the early '70s frequently remark on the small number of Muslims who lived in the area at that time. Muhammad Badruzzaman, owner of *The Last Viceroy* restaurant in Osborne Rd and a former president of the Jami mosque, remembers there being very few Bengalis in Portsmouth at that time, mainly waiters from the restaurants with a few also employed in the dockyard. He also remembers there being a few Zanzibarians, who were also Muslims, together with members of the Saudi and Iranian navies who were undergoing training at the naval base.[111] The two latter groups were, of course, transitory. For this reason, the room over the *Light of Bengal*, and the later mosque in Marmion Rd, were adequate to meet the needs of the faithful. However, Muhammad Badruzzaman considers that, by about the year 2000, the number of Muslims in Portsmouth had grown four-fold. It was this continued growth in numbers that forced the mosque committee to once again look for larger premises.

In 1999, following an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Jami Mosque Society, it was agreed that a former cinema building at Bradford Junction should be purchased and altered to meet the needs of the local Muslim community. Once again a huge organisational effort was required, this time the sum to be raised in excess of £200,000. To convert the new building additional sums had to be spent on creating offices and washrooms as well as a main prayer room (able to accommodate 4,000 worshipers). In addition, the new Jami Mosque, due to its size, has also been able to accommodate Islamic classes, these meetings taking place in the evenings for the teaching of Arabic and Koranic prayers.[112]

Following the setting up of the new Jami Mosque, a second mosque has also been established, the Portsmouth Central Mosque, created in a former church in Fratton. Established in 2001, it partly resulted from a divergence of opinion over the future of the former Marmion Rd mosque. According to the Islamic faith, the building could not simply be sold. Having once been a mosque, it could never be returned to secular use. One possibility was that of it becoming a 'hafizia madrassa' (a day and boarding school dedicated to the learning of the Koran). The majority though, did not favour this as a solution, leading to those who favoured the setting up of a hafizia madrassa, to break away. They founded the Portsmouth Central Mosque while continuing to campaign for the conversion of the former mosque building into a school open to both day students and boarders.[113]

This strong religious commitment is a clear point of contrast with the majority of those who live in Portsmouth. While it does not prevent a mixing of the two cultures, it does cause occasional difficulties. This is particularly so for the young of the community. In February 2002, Nazmin Akthar, then studying at Portsmouth High School, noted,

> The western culture and my ethnic background is completely contradictory to each other. For example the clothing, the styles, the religious aspects, everything is different. Where I go there is no Muslim peoples, so I can't express myself properly because loads of people do what I can't do. For example, it is quite hard to get along. You can't go out with them as it is against your religion. It is quite hard to mix with people, I think.[114]

A further problem is that of language. Bangladeshi families, including Nazmin Akthar's, usually speak only Bengali-Sylhetti in the home. While the speaking and learning of the mother-tongue should not be discouraged, it does mean that young children, on first attending primary school, have little previous exposure to English. This was an experience confronted by Nazmin, so making her first few years of school 'an awful experience'.[115]

Abdul Bari Choudhury, the first president of the Jami Mosque Society, was also connected with another important community organisation, the Bangladesh Welfare Association. Indeed, he was one of its first presidents. For its part, the Bangladesh Welfare Association had grown out of the Pakistan Welfare Association, this originally formed in the late-1960s. Upon Bangladesh declaring its independence, the society naturally changed its name. At all times, the object of the organisation has been to help those of the community who are in need, with the community defined as those from Bangladesh who live within a fifteen mile radius of the Guildhall.[116]

In reality, there are few nations that are not represented in modern Portsmouth.[117] Little, for instance, has been said of one particularly diverse group, those from the continent of Africa. In 1969, when Nigerian-born Marie Costa first moved to Portsmouth, she joined, what she readily admits, to have been a very small community. A midwife, she was informed, by some of those around her, that she was the first black woman in Portsmouth to hold such a position, but as to whether this was viewed as 'something good or bad', she was never sure.[118] Since her arrival in Portsmouth, Marie has seen a considerable growth in the number of first generation Africans living in the city, the 2001 census recording their number to be approximately 600. The Portsmouth NHS Trust has played an important part in this increase of numbers, actively recruiting doctors and nurses from both the English-speaking countries of southern Africa and other parts of this continent.[119] In

Marie Costa with the Lord Mayor, Tom Blair, at the South-East Hants Multicultural Festival, Castle Field, in 2003.
(Courtesy of Marie Costa)

addition to those trained in the medical field, overseas students, enrolling at the university and the city's two colleges, have further enhanced the size of the African community albeit students remain in Portsmouth for only a short period of time.[120]

Marie Costa, herself, is an active member of the African community in Portsmouth and has helped bring a degree of unity through the formation of an African women's group. In addition, and for a number of years, she has been an active member of the South-East Hants Multicultural Group. In chairing this group, she has helped ensure that it has become a focal point in uniting not only various diverse groups from Africa but also those drawn to Portsmouth from a huge range of other nations. She has also helped ensure an African contribution to the multi-cultural festival, this an annual event held each September in Southsea.[121]

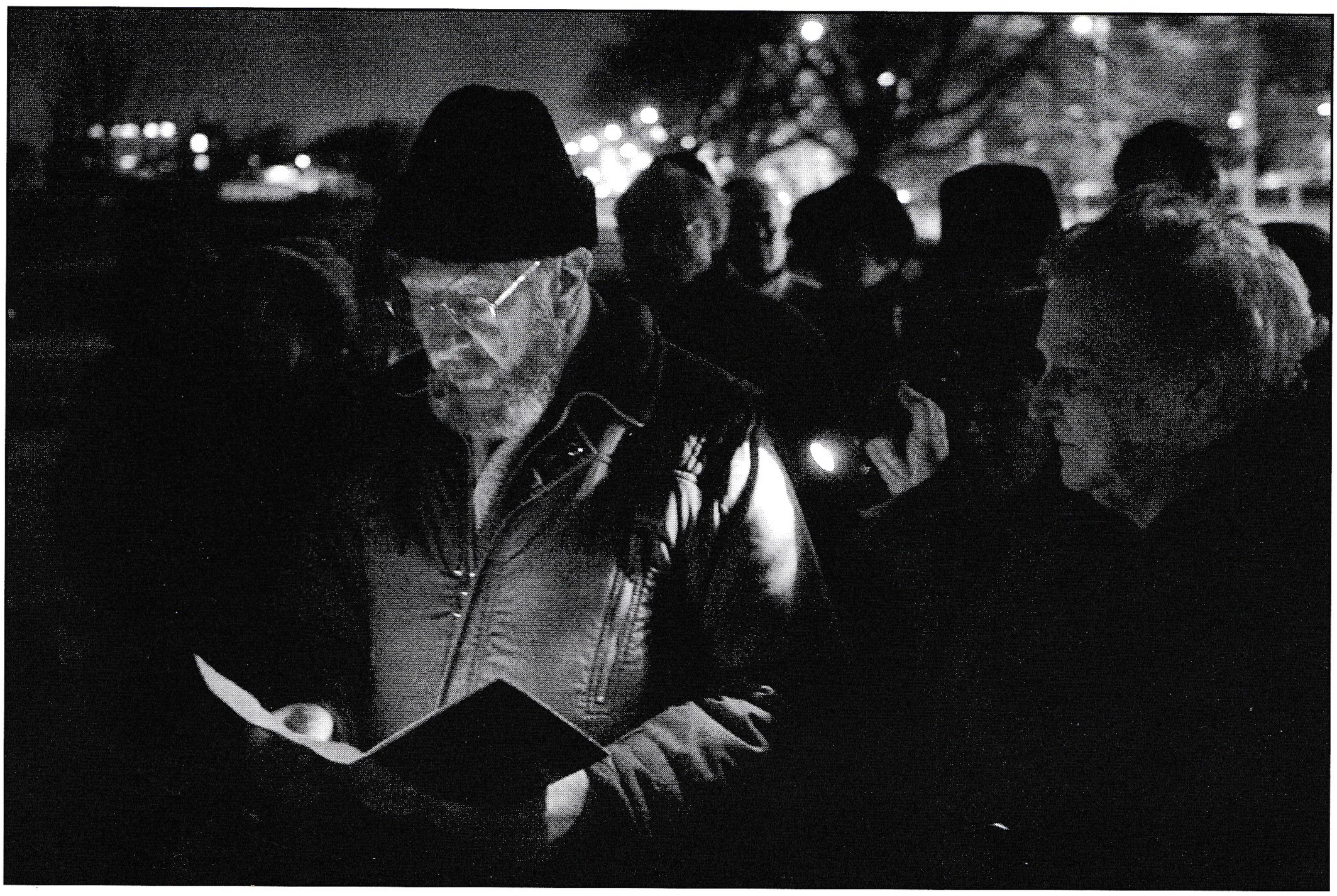
Another initiative taken by Black Africans living in Portsmouth is that of Portsmouth Francophone Space. Closely linked to the university, but drawing members from throughout Portsmouth, it is aimed at bringing together those from French-speaking Africa. Its first chairman, a Congolese-born resident of Portsmouth, F. Muyembe, identifies the society as one devoted to promoting artistic creativity and the linking of British volunteers to francophone projects in the UK and overseas.[122] Evidence of a growing number of French-speaking African settlers in Portsmouth is to be found at the Jubilee church in Somerstown where services are held in both English and French. According to the two pastors of the church, Mark Chandler and Baye Bobala, there are now 80 Congolese members.[123]

The Zanzibarian community is the longest established group from the continent of Africa, its connections with Portsmouth going back to the 1950s. Several Zanzibarians were, in that decade, studying at Portsmouth Municipal College (the progenitor of the university) the first of whom was Mohammed Riyami. Sponsored by the Colonial Office, he enrolled at the college in 1954. While Portsmouth had not necessarily been his choice (but rather that of the Colonial Office), it subsequently led to a number of other Zanzibarians also attending the college. As overseas students eventually move away from the area in which they study, this Zanzibarian connection may well have proved transitory. However, events within Zanzibar created a more permanent connection.

In January 1964, as a result of revolution, the Sultan of Zanzibar, the nation's traditional ruler, together with many of his supporters and followers, were forced to leave the country. Given asylum by the British government, they were permitted to settle in the UK. With a connection already established in Portsmouth, many chose to come to the city. Mohammad Riyami estimates that 200 to 250 Zanzibarians settled in the city at this time, among them the Sultan.

This newly established community was not particularly wealthy. Most had fled the country with only the lightweight tropical clothes that they had been wearing. Having arrived in Portsmouth, they were initially dependent on charity. This was not something they relished, most quickly accepting any paid employment they were offered. Frequently, and despite many being highly trained university graduates, this was factory work.

Julius Klein, himself a victim of Nazi persecution, reads a Hebrew prayer by torchlight near the Holocaust memorial within the synagogue at Southsea. It was part of a special service held in January 2005 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.
(Courtesy of *The News,* Portsmouth)



Among those who had been granted asylum was Mohammad Riyami. Following his early student years at Portsmouth, he had then studied for a law degree at Hull before returning to Zanzibar. Taking up employment in the Sultan's government civil service, he was among those who, in 1964, were forced to leave. Following a series of low paid jobs in Portsmouth, he eventually secured employment as a secondary school teacher.

An important initiative of the Zanzibarians in Portsmouth was the establishment of the Zanzibar Organisation. Initially a political body to counter the propaganda of the Zanzibarian revolutionary government, it also had an important welfare role. This latter was eventually to take on much greater significance, with the organisation having as its major present day objective that of helping all Zanzibarians, whether living in Britain or overseas.

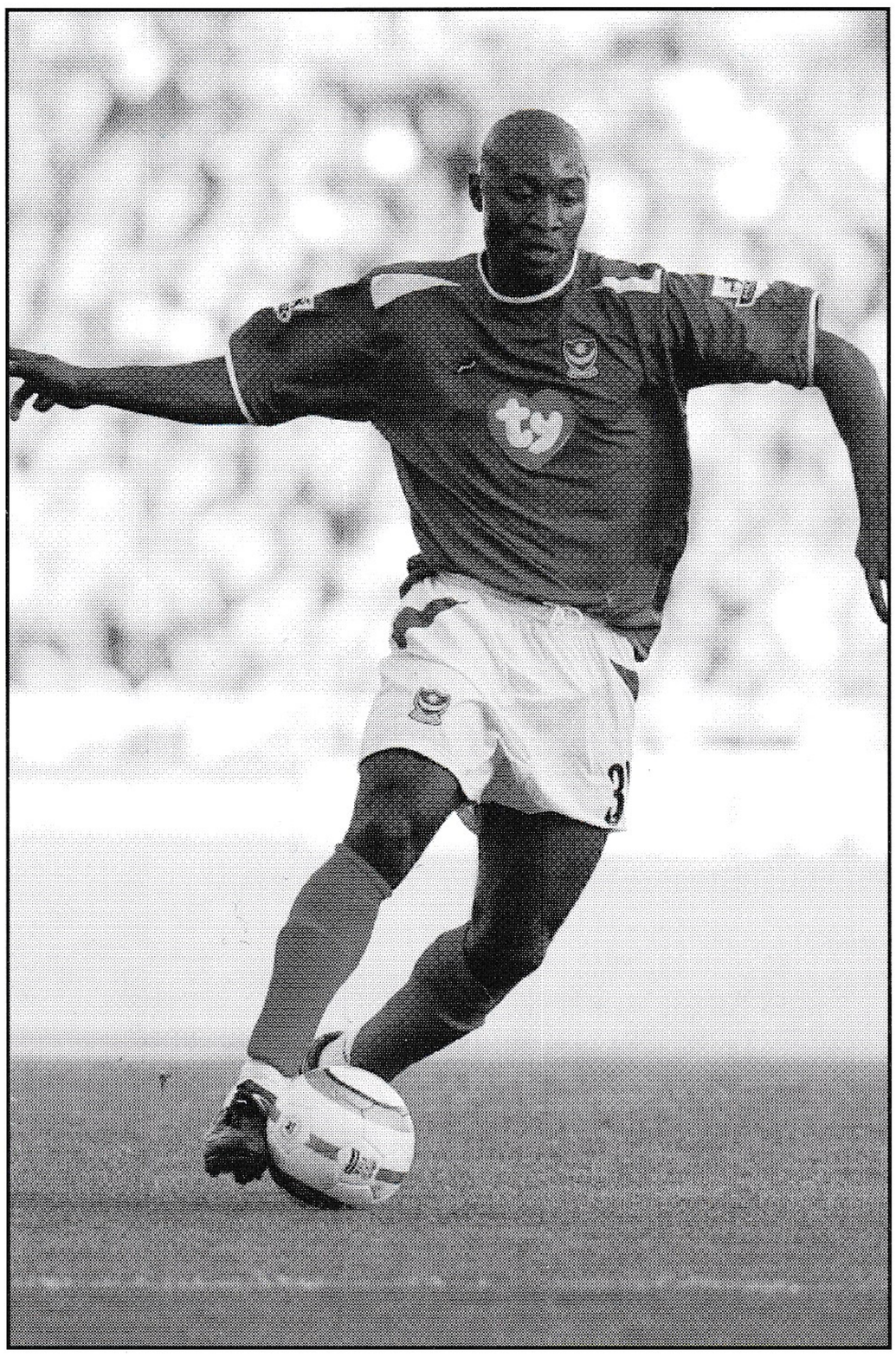
Nowadays, about seventy of the original Zanzibarian settlers remain in Portsmouth, among them Mohammed Riyami, now general secretary of the Zanzibar Organisation. Following his employment as a teacher, Mohammed went on to specialise in the teaching of English to new arrivals. In 1970 he started the first ESOL classes in Portsmouth, these taught at Southsea Modern for Boys. His lifetime's work for the Zanzibarian and other minority communities living in Portsmouth was rewarded in October 2004 when, at a ceremony at Buckingham Place, he received the MBE.[124]

The Jewish community in Portsmouth still thrives as a religious group, but is much reduced in number. The 2001 census indicated the total of Jews living in Portsmouth to be about 300. As for membership of the synagogue, this stands at about 150. Of this number, some are drawn from a much wider area than just that of Portsea Island. However, it is hoped that membership will again revive, this a result of the appointment of a new rabbi. For many years, due to a lack of funding, the synagogue was without a permanent rabbi.[125]

As in earlier days, the Portsmouth Jewish community maintains its links with the military. During World War Two it took in those young American Jews who came to this country to fight against Nazi Germany. In more recent years, members of the community have extended their hospitality to visiting Israeli soldiers and sailors. Sometimes these groups have been merely passing through while at other times they have been undergoing extended periods of training.

A problem for the Jewish community is that of the occasional and continuing attacks upon its property. Sometimes it is mere vandalism but at other times it is out and out racism. The worst case occurred in the mid-1990s when graves in the Fawcett Rd cemetery were daubed with swastikas. Not unnaturally the cemetery is always kept locked with the key only available from the warden of the synagogue.[126]

Lomana Lualua. A prolific goal scorer for Portsmouth FC, he first joined the club in the 2003-4 season. His family came to the UK from the Congo in search of political asylum. Having experienced, as a young boy, a British detention centre, Lualua has helped publicise the poor conditions of these centres.
(Courtesy of *The News*, Portsmouth)



The New Millennium

As a place of refuge, Portsmouth has long welcomed those fleeing from authoritarian regimes. During the last three decades of the 20th century, Portsmouth has given aid and succour to those who have been forced to flee Vietnam and Laos (1970s), Chile (1970s), Uganda (1972), Kurds from Iraq Syria and Turkey (1980s onwards), the Congo, Afghanistan, Kosova and Sri Lanka (late-1990s onwards).

Yet to suggest that merely setting foot in Portsmouth is an end to the worries of those seeking asylum would be wrong. In 2004, *The News* focussed on one particular family, the Sulaimans. Of Kurdish origin and born in Syria, three members of the family, Amina and her two daughters, Eva and Lorin, managed to leave the country, arriving in Portsmouth in October 2003. Their reasons were quite simple: in Syria they were denied all civil rights, including those of marriage, education and a passport. Unwilling to accept this situation, several members of the family had joined a political group that wished to improve the status of Kurds, resulting in persecution, with Amina's husband and eldest son sent to prison. At the same time, Amina found herself similarly threatened. Having set about establishing a new life in the city, Lorin attending

Eva Sulaiman (left) and her sister Lorin. Of a Kurdish family, they are refugees from Syria.
(Courtesy of *The News*, Portsmouth)

Mayfield School and Eva becoming a student at Portsmouth Sixth Form College, the immigration authorities decided to return the family to Syria. While being held at a deportation holding centre at Gatwick airport fourteen-year-old Lorin, was able to post a letter to one of her teachers. Believing that she was unlikely to ever meet again with her friends at the school, she decorated the letter with people crying and wrote,

> Can you say thank you to everyone at Mayfield for me and let the people know I will miss them and never forget the amazing and wonderful opportunity that God gave me to go to school for the first time.
>
> Please try to help us. My life and my family's lives rely on you. If they send us back they [the Syrian authorities] will kill us straight away.

This letter launched a local campaign to rescue the family from the holding centre. In this *The News* played an essential role, as did the family's MP, Sid Rapson. Much more important was the reaction of the local community, a large number of individuals prepared to back the campaign and support the Sulaimans. Through the pages of *The News*, Amina expressed her thanks, 'We came to this country for human rights, where are they now? I am so proud of my daughters for being so strong and thank you so much to those who have been supporting us'.[127] Currently, the Sulaiman family, who were returned to Portsmouth as a result of the campaign, still have an uncertain future. Given extended leave to remain in the United Kingdom, a final decision on their future has yet to be taken.[128]

The Portsmouth community has not always been quite so supportive of those who have come here as a result of much suffering. Some have complained of racial attack with the number of recorded incidents in Portsmouth dramatically increasing after the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Centre. In part, this may be a result of a better reporting procedure; both the city council and Hampshire police being much more alert to the need to record and act upon racially motivated hate crimes. Even so, far more race-hate crimes go unreported than are reported, with many members of Portsmouth's ethnic

Sonya Newton and Eve Rudder cooking at the Caribbean Island Association stall at the Portsmouth Multicultural Festival, c.2002. The CIA has won many prizes for their floats in local carnivals.
(PMRS)

minority communities choosing to ignore the insults with which they are frequently confronted.[129]

In the summer of 2003, this seamier side of Portsmouth life was temporarily placed under the microscope. In June of that year a 23-year old Iraqi woman, who refused to make her name public through fear of retribution, made it clear that there was a high level of racism in Portsmouth. The woman, who lived in Buckland and was studying at Portsmouth university, expressed her concerns on the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme. During a short interview she told of how, while in Portsmouth, she had been spat upon, sworn at and had eggs thrown at her. Despite the dangers of living in Baghdad, she was considering a return to the city of her birth, 'Back home, my family are in danger. Here I am in danger. I will be very happy to leave and start my life over there, whatever the situation is there. If I die, I will die with my family, not here.'

Among those who entered the debate was a former leader of the council, Leo Madden, who pointed out that only a small number of people were involved in these attacks. For this reason, he hoped 'that people would not see Portsmouth as a racist city' as 'every city across the country faces the same problem'. To this, Mike Hancock, MP for Portsmouth South, added, 'I don't think Portsmouth is a bad place' and also suggested that racial abuse in Portsmouth was no worse than elsewhere.[130]

The butchery counter at MA Food, Kingston Rd, a Bangladeshi supermarket, 2002.
(PMRS)

Yet the Muslim community seemed less prepared to support the politicians' views. Muhammed Badruzzman was not particularly surprised by what had happened to the woman. In an interview given to *The News*, he stated,

> Portsmouth is getting worse by the day. There are not that many people from minority groups in Portsmouth but there are quite a few incidents of racial abuse. Proportionately I think there are more here than elsewhere. This is partly because of the war. The city has strong links with the Navy. When servicemen were killed in the Gulf, some may have wanted revenge.[131]

These are words that need to be taken seriously. Muhammad Badruzzman, as previously noted, has considerable experience of life in the city, having lived in Portsmouth for more than thirty years.

While interviewing members of Portsmouth's ethnic minority communities as part of an oral history project, members of Portsmouth Museums and Records Service have found that racism is an issue of major concern. Among those who agreed to be interviewed was Eve Rudder. She was born in Portsmouth in 1968 and is of mixed race parentage and first confronted racial prejudice while at primary school. Here, other children would call her names that had clearly been learnt from their parents. On telling her mum of how she was being treated, she was told it was simply because she was different, like being picked on for wearing glasses or being overweight. These taunts became much more serious when she moved to secondary school, partly because some parents were supporters of the National Front. In the interview, she described how a small group made her life 'hell', persuading others not to talk to her while often directing the term 'seig hail' towards her.[132]

For their part, the guardians of the city are not complacent about the existence and more recent increase in racial abuse. There is a clear determination to stamp heavily upon crimes of race hate. Improved reporting procedures have been introduced, the local police are far more active in the investigation of such crimes and offenders are more frequently taken to court. In addition, schools and colleges throughout Portsmouth have broadened and diversified their taught curricula, this encouraging an understanding of world issues and a more positive attitude to those of all races. Yet, as is clear from an increase in the number of reported racial incidents in Portsmouth, the problem still persists. The year 2004, for instance, witnessed a one-third increase in the number of reports, the final total for that year being in excess of 500.

Sun Hung Chang, a successful business founded about 1984, photographed 2003. The founder and his family were 'Boat People', surviving pirates and shipwreck to escape persecution in Vietnam.
(PMRS)

Conclusion

Indeed, evidence of racism is one of the continuing themes that have run through this history of overseas settlement in Portsmouth. While it is something that is more open and reflected upon in this day and age it was something that was more often ignored in earlier times. Only occasionally, when the acts of racism were particularly horrific, or in some other way newsworthy, did they become documented. Levels of racism in times past can only be guessed at, but there is enough evidence from newspaper reports and personal memories, to show that it was an ever-present undercurrent of daily life. It is the existence of such attitudes that explains; if only in part, the failure of many overseas settlers to obtain jobs that reflect their skills. For this reason, and helping explain a feature common to many new groups of settlers, they often became small traders, running their own independent businesses. For groups as diverse as those from Italy, Bangladesh and China, this resulted in a successful entry into the food trade. In turn, this has resulted in a positive impact on Portsmouth, providing a gateway through which a minority community has been able to interact with the majority. Those who regularly visit such outlets have become more familiar and friendlier towards minority groups that might otherwise have found themselves completely isolated.

As a city Portsmouth has steadily expanded through immigration. While the great majority of those who annually enter and settle in the city are British white, this has rarely been to the exclusion of those from other groups. Settlement in Portsmouth by those from overseas has been a persistent feature of the city's history. At times, it has been fairly limited, but at no point in the history of Portsmouth over the past two centuries has it been non-existent. At other times however, due to famine, war or revolution, larger groups of people have been forced to immigrate to England, with Portsmouth becoming one of many separate destinations. On top of this push factor, there is an important pull factor, that of manpower shortages and the need to encourage those in other countries to come England. Within Portsmouth, the dockyard, the Royal Navy, hospitals, public transport and clothing manufacturers have all, over the years, welcomed and encouraged new arrivals with open arms. However, in national terms, the number of those choosing Portsmouth as a home has never been high, other cities, particularly London, Birmingham and Bristol, have long possessed overseas communities that are much greater in proportion to their own British white communities than these to be found in Portsmouth.

The Population of Portsmouth, 1801-2001	
1801	32,160
1811	40,567
1821	45,048
1831	50,389
1841	53,032
1851	72,096
1861	94,799
1871	112,954
1881	127,989
1891	159,251
1901	188,133
1911	231,165
1921	247,343
1931	249,300
1951	233,545
1961	215,077
1971	197,431
1981	175,382
1991	177,142
2001	186,701

NOTES

[1] Nick Merriman, *The Peopling of London* (Museum of London, 1993)
[2] *The News*, 21 September 2005; Merriman, op. cit., p.3
[3] Census, 1991
[4] British Library website: www.bl.uk/collections/business/asiandemography
[5] The National Archive (hereafter **NA**) ADM 105/44. The hulks moored in Portchester Lake were *Portland, Prothee, Fortitude, St Damasco* and *Crown*. Portchester Castle, which at that time had yet to be brought into use as a prison, was nevertheless in a state of readiness to receive 1,200 prisoners while Forton was being prepared as a hospital for the sick and wounded.
[6] NA ADM 105/44, 27 April 1801. To this number should be added a further 78, these being healthy prisoners who were employed as helpers at the two hospitals. As a result, the grand total for April 1801 was 5,617 prisoners of war held in the Portsmouth area.
[7] Sheldon S. Cohen, *Thomas Wren, Portsmouth's Patron of American Liberty* (Portsmouth Paper 57, 1991), p. 9
[8] T. Connor, 'A Yankee Privateersman in Prison in England', in *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 30 (1876)
[9] NA ADM105/44, 7 August 1797
[10] NA ADM 105/44, 19 Dec 1796
[11] Ibid.
[12] NA ADM36/9199. Muster book of *Prince William.* Unfortunately, although a number of other ships, including *Fortune*, *Barfleur* and *Albermarle*, returned with *Prince William,* their muster books do not include entries for place of birth. See NA ADM36/10277;9192;10082 respectively. However, there is no reason to believe that these vessels would not also have had a similarly high proportion of their crew originating in the West Indies.
[13] Lt John MacKenzie, RN, *Considerations on the Impress Service* (London, 1786) and reproduced in J.S. Bromley (ed.), *Manning Pamphlets, 1693-1873* (Naval Records Society, 1974), pp.124-40
[14] W.E.H. Lecky, *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (1892), III, pp.515-7 suggests the Irish represented 30 per cent of those joining the Navy at this time.
[15] Primarily, this was because of Ireland having a population that was 75 per cent greater than that of Scotland. In addition, Scots who did take to the colours, tended to prefer the Army.
[16] NA ADM1/982, 3 February 1783
[17] NA ADM36/9992, *Ganges* muster book, Jan-Feb 1782. In addition, others originating from beyond the borders of England (with total number for each country in brackets): Isle of Man (1), Wales (8), Bengal (1), Portugal (2), Barbados (1), Saxony (1), Danzig (1).
[18] The British Army, in January 1804, recorded a total of 17,039 serving foreign rank and file. By January 1813 this figure had increased to 52,737. See Christopher D. Hall, *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War, 1803-15* (Manchester University Press, 1992), pp.13-14.
[19] James H. Thomas, *The Seaborne Trade of Portsmouth 1650-1800* (Portsmouth Paper 40, 1984), pp.12, 22-3
[20] Geoffrey L. Green, *The Royal Navy & Anglo-Jewry* (Geoffrey Green, 1989), pp.30-7
[21] Green, op. cit., pp.111-2
[22] William Robinson, *Jack Nastyface, the Memoirs of an English Seaman* (1836. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, reprint 1988), p.96
[23] NA HO50/45, 1 June 1798. Re-quoted from Green, op. cit., p.63
[24] *Naval Chronicle*, 1812 Vol. 28, p.371. This first synagogue in Portsmouth had been built in 1749. The Jewish burial ground in Fawcett Rd was consecrated in 1747. See Green, op. cit., p.30
[25] Portsmouth Hebrew Congregation Minute Book, September 1811, re-quoted from Green, op. cit., p.117
[26] V.J.L. Fontana, *Rebirth of Roman Catholicism in Portsmouth* (Portsmouth Paper 56, 1989), pp.4-6
[27] Ibid., p.17
[28] Harold Bagust, *The Greater Genius? The Biography of Marc Isambard Brunel* (Ian Allen, 2006), p.31
[29] Nigel Surry, *Art in a Dockyard Town: Portsmouth, 1770-1845* (Portsmouth Paper 59, 1992), pp.12-14
[30] Elias Arnaud's memorial can be found towards the east end of the cathedral nave. Not far from this same point is a memorial to Captain Ivan Karsakoff of the Russian warship *Europa*. He died in Portsmouth on 7 January 1790 while his ship, together with a number of other Russian vessels, was visiting.
[31] Thomas, op. cit., pp.17-8
[32] *Hampshire Telegraph*, 13 September 1834
[33] Ibid., 12 September 1834
[34] *Portsmouth Herald*, 19 September 1834
[35] Ibid., 23 February 1834
[36] London *Times*, 28 August 1834
[37] *Hampshire Telegraph*, 15 November 1834, p.4
[38] Ibid., 22 November 1834, p.4
[39] NA T50/18, 31 May 1841. Pay List of Polish Refugees
[40] *Hampshire Telegraph*, 23 November 1834
[41] Ibid.
[42] Walter Besant, *Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant* (London, 1902), p.19
[43] NA, RG8
[44] NA RG 9. Appendix to 1861 census, table 126, page 160. According to this report, Portsmouth was only one of 31 towns in England and Wales where an Irish-born population exceeded 1,000. See also Graham Davis, *The Irish in Britain 1815-1914* (London, 1991)
[45] *The Hampshire Guardian,* 26 July 1848
[46] NA RG12/0863, 0877. One particular regiment at Portsmouth on census night 1891 was the 600-strong Inniskilling regiment based at the Victoria Barracks (with an additional number in the military hospital). This was a predominantly Irish regiment, with 437 (73 per cent) of recruits of Irish birth.
[47] NA RG12/853-77
[48] Robert Radclyffe Dolling, *Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum* (London, 1896), *passim*
[49] Aubrey Weinberg, *Portsmouth Jewry* (Portsmouth Paper 41, 1985), p.13
[50] Ibid., 16-17
[51] Weinberg, op. cit., p.17
[52] NA RG11/1147
[53] NA RG11/1139-47
[54] NA RG12/853-77
[55] *The News*, 6 February 1976
[56] Author's interview with Angela Ribbans, the great-granddaughter of Sabatini Pitassi, November 2005
[57] Robert R. Dolling, *Ten Years in a Portsmouth Slum* (London, 1897), p.166
[58] NA RG12/874. In Florence Rd two adjoining houses, nos 5 and 6, both employed German speakers, one as a governor and the other as a teacher of German.
[59] NA RG12/863
[60] NA RG12/853-77
[61] The 1881 census proves him to have been born on the Isle of Wight. NA RG12/864, f.32
[62] Philip Knightley, *The Second Oldest Profession* (1986)
[63] *The News*, 20 August 1914
[64] Ibid.
[65] *The News*, 10 August 1914
[66] *The News*, 1 September 1914
[67] *The News*, 5 September 1914
[68] *The News*, 9 September 1914
[69] NA RG11/2437, f.45
[70] *Hampshire Telegraph*, 28 May 1915
[71] Ibid., 18 June 1915
[72] Ibid., 25 June 1915
[73] *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 July 1918
[74] NA WO900/45
[75] Ann Day, 'Driven from Home: the closure of Pembroke Dockyard and the impact on its community', in *Llafur* 7:1 (1996), pp.78-86
[76] Unpublished paper presented by Dr Ken Lunn in July 1995
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ann Day, op. cit., 85
[79] John Stedman (ed.), *People of Portsmouth* (Breedon Books, 2002), p.95
[80] Robert Mack, who was born in Leeds in 1899, in being elected to Fratton ward, defeated Hyman Filer. Filer was, himself, a Jewish asylum seeker who, as a newly-wed from Warsaw, had come to Portsmouth in 1900, joining his brother Myer. Hyman Myer, who went on to establish himself as a tailor, eventually supplied uniforms to H.M. Forces. As for Robert Mack, he continued to represent Fratton until 1950. Two years later, he was elected for Portsea Ward, remaining a councillor until his death in 1961.
[81] Author's interview with Sylvia Mendel, September 2004
[82] John Stedman (ed.) op. cit., 116
[83] Portsmouth Museums & Records Service (hereafter **PMRS**), Oral History Interview 5200A Les Ford
[84] Ibid.
[85] Mass Observation Archives, University of Sussex. File reports 1095 and 1569
[86] Graham Smith, *When Jim Crow Met John Bull* (London, 1987), p.203
[87] John Stedman (ed.) op. cit., p.119
[88] *The News*, 28 January 2005
[89] Julius Klein, interview with author, October 2004

[90] Phil Vasili, *Colouring Over the White Lines* (Mainstream Publishing, 2000), p.99
[91] Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Soc., Oral History interview PD3-AD-207 Mickey Scotland and Don Usher, stored at PMRS
[92] Norman Gordon, 'Bermudians and all that Jazz' in *The Journal of the Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Trust,* Vol. 4 (September 1996), p.25
[93] Anonymous female, quoted in *My Islands: Voices from the Caribbean Community in Portsmouth*, an exhibition held at Portsmouth City Museum & Records Office, 2004
[94] Ibid.
[95] Frank Toppin., interview with author, 23 April 1996
[96] Donna Simpson, quoted in *My Islands*, loc.cit.
[97] Sonya Newton, quoted in *My Islands*, loc.cit.
[98] PMRS, Oral History interview 2394A Lydia Briano
[99] Ibid.
[100] *The News*, 17 November 2005
[101] John Stedman (ed.) op. cit., p.96
[102] Portsmouth Royal Dockyard Historical Soc., Oral History interview PD3/SO/10 Charles Triccas, stored at PMRS
[103] Jaswan Singh and Shingar Singh, interviews with author, 19 January 1997
[104] *The News*, 26 May 1998
[105] The earliest Chinese to settle in Portsmouth were those who had once served in the Royal Navy. During the 20th century, any sizeable warship would normally boast a 'Chinese laundry'. Manned by native-born Chinese, these crewmembers were responsible for the occasional repair together with the washing and pressing of uniforms and work fatigues. At the end of their period of service, most would return to their country of birth. A few however, often through marriage to a British citizen, who they may well have met in Portsmouth, would choose to settle in the United Kingdom. In so doing, they would continue their original shipboard trade. Almost certainly, this explains the existence of at least one Chinese laundry in Portsmouth during the 1920s, in Edinburgh Rd. See Kelly's Directory for Portsmouth, 1922.
[106] David Yau Lai, interview with author, October 2004
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ebadur Chowdhury, interview with author, June 2005
[109] PMRS, Oral History interview 5058A Abdul Hye Chowdhury, 15 April 2002
[110] Ibid.
[111] PMRS, Oral History interview 5066A Muhammad Zaman Badruzzaman
[112] Ibid.
[113] Nasima Hoque and Ebadur Choudhury, respectively members of the two mosques, interview with author, June 2005
[114] PMRS, Oral History interview 5077A Nazmin Akthar, 27 February 2002
[115] Ibid.
[116] In more recent years, and working in conjunction with the Bangladesh Welfare Association, more regional-specific groups have been formed, these providing welfare support for those who originated in the districts Moulvibazar, Habiganj and Sylhet.
[117] According to a report in *The News* (21 September 2005) approximately sixty languages are spoken in Portsmouth schools. A further indicator of Portsmouth's diversity is that of the more than 20 cultural groups listed in the city council's directory, *One City, Many Cultures* (Portsmouth City Council, 2001). Each represents a specific cultural or national group that has extensive connections to Portsmouth. In addition, the city also has a number of broader umbrella groups, among which are the Portsmouth Race Equality Network Organisation (PRENO), the Portsmouth Multicultural Group and the Multicultural Link Group.
[118] Marie Costa, interview with author, 17 October 2005
[119] Apart from recruiting in a number of African countries, the Portsmouth NHS Trust has been active in a number of other countries, bringing to Portsmouth nurses from the Philippines.
[120] Approximately 8.6 per cent of students enrolled during the 2004-5 academic year at the University originated from outside of the EU. Source: University Equality and Diversity Report, 2005.
[121] Marie Costa, interview with author, 17 October 2005
[122] F. Muyembe, interview with author, 4 November 2005. There is no available figure for the number of French-speaking Black Africans in Portsmouth. Primarily, those living in the city were born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and came here as asylum seekers fleeing persecution.
[123] www.portsmouthchurches.co.uk/news, 19 November 2004
[124] Information about Zanzibarians in Portsmouth and the Zanzibar Organisation are drawn from author's interview with Mr Mohammed Riyami, MBE, 14 December 2005.
[125] Julius Klein, interview with author, 28 October 2004
[126] Ibid.
[127] *The News*, 4 November & 8 December 2004
[128] Eva Sulaiman, interview with author, June 2006
[129] Author's conclusion based on interviews and informal contacts with members of the BME communities
[130] *The News*, 13 & 14 June 2003
[131] *The News*, 14 June 2003
[132] PMRS Oral History interview 5375A Eve Rudder

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